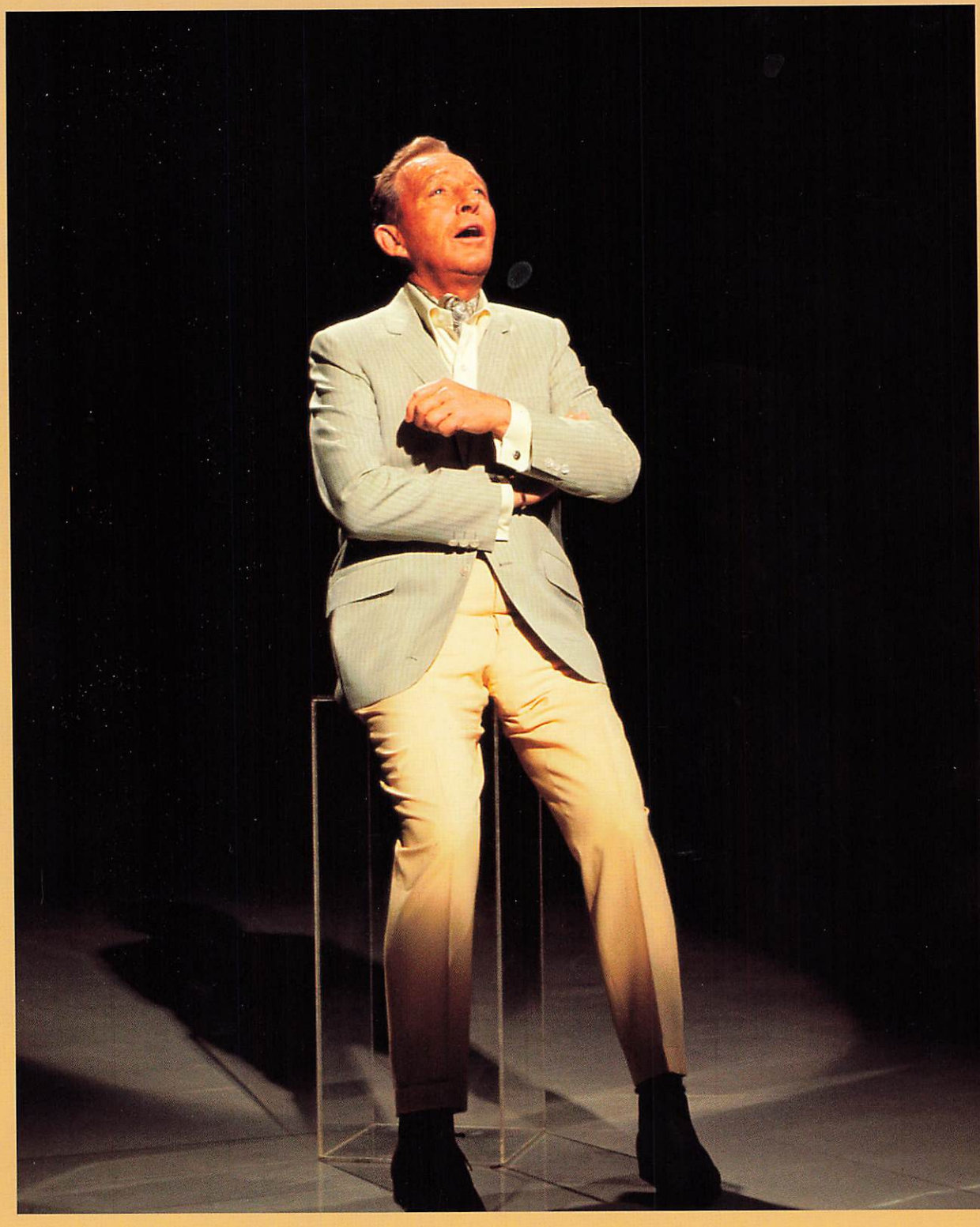
BING

WINTER 2020
No. 186



THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club – as recognised by the **Guinness Book of World Records**

Our Mission:

To perpetuate the memory and the musical legacy of Bing Crosby for the benefit of future generations

Membership

Membership renewals fall due on 1st January each year and subscription rates effective for 2021 are:

USA and Canada	**US $35 or C$45 per annum**
UK	**£20 per annum**
Mainland Europe, including Eire	**£23 per annum**
Australia and New Zealand	**A$50 per annum**
Rest of the World	**£24 per annum**

All remittances should be sent to Michael Crampton in **£ sterling** payable to **The International Club Crosby** with the exception of:

(a) American members who should pay Perry Huntoon in US dollars

(b) Canadian members who should pay Scott Payne in US or Canadian dollars

(c) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

Websites

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BING Magazine: www.bingmagazine.co.uk
Bing Crosby Enterprises: www.BingCrosby.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326
Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Club_Crosby

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or to the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

BING is the official journal of *The International Club Crosby* and is published in the spring, summer and winter of each year. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC.

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Editorial

As we head into the Christmas holidays it will be great to hear Bing's voice all over the place and on the radio. It always annoys us Crosby supporters that the general public knows so little about the rest of Der Bingle's vast repertoire but let's be grateful that his Christmas recordings are so popular and help to keep his legacy alive and thriving, even in these strange times as we battle the dreadful virus.

We had a minor panic with our last issue as one of the eight parcels dispatched to Perry went astray. Fortunately we had sufficient spares due to the requirement of a minimum 500 print run to replace the missing parcel. However it did mean that about 30 members were a little late in getting their magazine.

It was with great sadness that we received the news of the passing of our honorary member Regis Philbin. A life-long Crosby fan, Regis was constantly mentioning Bing in his dealings with the media. We have a more detailed obituary later in this edition.

There's a tremendous variety of material in this issue, ranging from Bing's early days until his last performance at the London Palladium. Anton considers some less well-known Christmas recordings by The Groaner, Chris Hammond looks in detail at Dixie Lee, John Bassett finds a "time capsule" and David Lobosco examines a 1956 film. Richard Baker has something to review at last, Ken Crossland has some beautiful memories and Martin McQuade talks about the output of BCP (you'll have to read his article to find out who they were!). Jeremy Rose reviews a rarely heard 1975 album and we give details of a long forgotten film song. There is original research into Bing's radio work in 1931/32 plus a lot more. Plenty for you to read over the holidays.

As I write this, I am about to enter hospital for a triple heart bypass so I have dispatched the material for this issue to the printer a little early. My apologies to those contributors whose articles have had to be held over until next time.

I wish you all the best for Christmas and the New Year. Stay safe!

Malcolm Macfarlane *macwilmslo@aol.com*

As my fellow British Co-Editor mentions above, we are once again nearing that time of year when Bing Crosby receives more widespread exposure and attention than at any other time. While it is sad to think that more than forty years after his passing, Bing's figure and legacy are not discussed and appreciated as often as we fans would like, it is still refreshing to know that come the end of each year, his rich baritone will be heard again enlivening our holiday season. There are also, in my view, reasons to feel a certain sense of encouragement regarding the pertinence and currency of Crosby's continuing cultural influence.

Not only do we now have a second volume of Gary Giddins's excellent biography of Der Bingle—and we are ever hopeful for a third and final installment—but

recently my friend Jon Oye alerted me to the fact that the beer manufacturing company Michelob has been using a snippet of Bing's recording of "Straight Down the Middle" for a TV commercial featuring famed American golfer Brooks Koepka. This is, undoubtedly, something that our man would have been delighted about. And just the other day, while rewatching the extensive Martin Scorsese-directed documentary about George Harrison, *Living in the Material World*, I had the chance to hear Olivia Harrison, widow of the quiet Beatle, mention that in the later years of his life her husband enjoyed sitting around and listening to Bing Crosby records for hours. Just one more example, I think, of the high esteem in which ensuing generations of pop musicians have held one of the key figures that helped start it all.

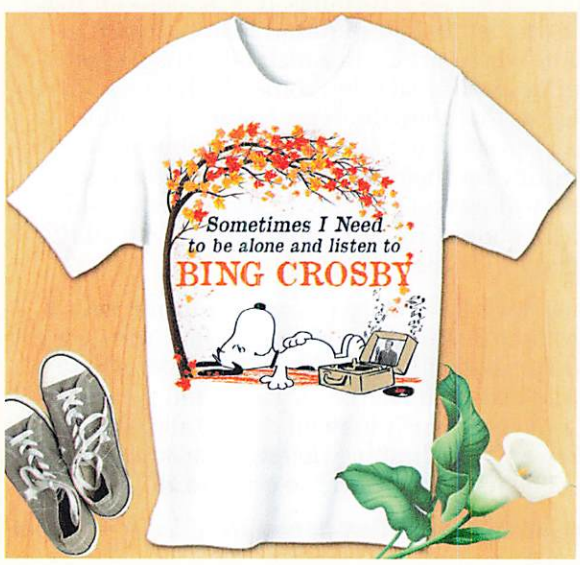
The holiday season is, indeed, one of the best moments of the year to be a Bing Crosby aficionado. And as the colder temperatures of the late autumn and early winter start to descend upon our small town here in Tennessee, especially this year when the global pandemic is surely going to make our holiday experience different and more challenging, I am personally more grateful than ever to be able to count on Bing's Christmas recordings. It is perhaps for that very reason that this time around I have decided to contribute a brief article in which I discuss his lesser-known Decca seasonal sides, some of which qualify as rare gems that sometimes get lost in the shuffle. As usual, I would like to thank all contributors to the magazine for their hard work, their enthusiasm, and their willingness to share their knowledge and excitement about Crosby's artistic legacy with all ICC members worldwide.

In closing, I would also like to send all my best wishes for a prompt recovery from his impending heart surgery to my friend and fellow British Co-Editor, for whose efforts and dedication to the magazine and the club we are always extremely grateful. And to all members, please stay safe and healthy wherever you happen to be. Happy holidays, Crosby-style, to one and all!

Anton Garcia-Fernandez *antongarciafdez@gmail.com*

Contents

Editorial 3
Secretary / Treasurer's Report. 4
Bing Crosby House.....5
Joe Sinnott 6
Reg Davis 6
National Garden of American Heroes.....7
A New Crosby Song.....8
Bing's Lager Commercial 9
That Christmas Feeling 9
Dixie Lee Junction.....11
The Greatest Song Writer Who Ever Lived ..13
Trading Post 14
Books 'n' Bing 15
Bing Crosby – A Lifetime of Music.....16
Bing Crosby: Movie and TV Mogul 17
Discovery of a Time Capsule.....20
A Southern Memoir.....22
Celluloid Crosby.....26
Bing Presents Oreste.....28
15 Minutes with Bing Crosby 28
One Sweet Letter from You.....31
Ken Crossland's Crosbyana 34
A Note from Australia 36
Bing on the Box.....38
Once in a While.....40
The Way We Were.....43
Keeping Track.....45



Secretary / Treasurer's Report

As I begin my report I want to extend to our esteemed editor Malcolm and our Australian representative David Currington, members' very best wishes for their speedy recoveries from heart surgery. Malcolm sprang into action with a plan immediately on learning of his surgery and hopefully this will have resulted in the magazine reaching you around the usual winter date. David has had his surgery and is steadily recovering and is hopeful that he will have been able to distribute the magazine within the normal timescales.

It is a pleasure to further recognise the generosity of our donors below who have contributed a substantial sum to the ICC account. Their contributions help ensure that the ICC accounts remain viable for 2021/2 and subscriptions / dues can therefore remain unchanged for next year.

New Members

We extend a very warm welcome to the following new members with a wish that they will find interest and enjoyment from their membership of the club. It is a special pleasure to welcome our first member from Russia. You are all amongst friends.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION
Tom Joe Mortel (Barnaul, Russia)

UNITED STATES
Dorothy Variotta (Marieta, Pennsylvania)
Gaige Lenhard (Wilmington, Delaware)

Donations

The following members have been very generous with their gifts and we are truly grateful for their support.

BRAZIL
Renato Falaice

IRELAND
Gerard Hanlon

UNITED KINGDOM
Nicholas Morrison, Ken Heason, David Pettifor, Jill Enno, Charles Wilkinson

UNITED STATES
Rory Burke

GERMANY
Our continuing thanks to Lars Schinnerling who

kindly distributes the magazines for our European and Irish members at his own expense.

Deaths

We are very sorry to record the loss of the following:

UNITED STATES

Regis Philbin (New York, New York)

Joseph (Joe) Sinnott (Kingston, New York)

UNITED KINGDOM

Reg Davis, aged 92 (Upton-On–Seven, Worcestershire)

Margaret White, age 79 (Offerton, Cheshire)

Tony Peverett, age 88 (Selsey, Sussex)

Leonard Hawkings (Ashton, Bristol)

It is always sad to learn of a member's passing but heartening and encouraging that relatives and friends let us know just how much the late member enjoyed their membership of the club.

Margaret White was a keen listener to Gerald Jackson's radio show on BBC Manchester and she put in a request every single week for a Crosby record. It is noticeable how Gerald's playing of Bing tracks has reduced considerably since Margaret's passing.

Malcolm has additional notes about Regis Philbin, Joe Sinnott, who was a world-famous comic book artist, and also about our former UK Editor Reg Davis.

We extend to all relatives and friends of the above our very sincere condolences.

Bing Crosby on CD

This is my usual reminder that the following single CDs remain available from me.

Costs as follows:

UK	**£7.50**
Europe	**£9.50**
Rest of the world	**£10.50**

The price for the double CD is:

UK	**£9.50**
Ireland & Europe	**£11.50**
Rest of the world	**£15**

Members in the US should obtain their copies via Perry Huntoon, in Australia from David Currington and in Canada from Scott Payne.

- **BING CROSBY – THROUGH THE YEARS – Vol 10**
- **BING CROSBY and the Kraft Music Hall – Rare Original Survivors**
- **BING CROSBY Entertains for Woodbury Soap**
- **BING CROSBY – GOOD AND RARE VOL 3.**
- **BING CROSBY – HOLIDAY IN EUROPE (and beyond)**
- **BING CROSBY - Sings for the Armed Forces Radio Service**
- **JOIN BING & SING ALONG (2 CD SET)**
- **PHILCO RADIO TIME – starring BING CROSBY (2 CD SET)**
- **CHESTERFIELD RADIO TIME - starring BING CROSBY (2 CD SET)**

My very best wishes to all members for Christmas and the New Year. Let's hope that by spring a vaccine for Covid 19 will be available to allow some kind of normality to be restored in our daily lives.

Michael Crampton *mdcrampton@gmail.com*

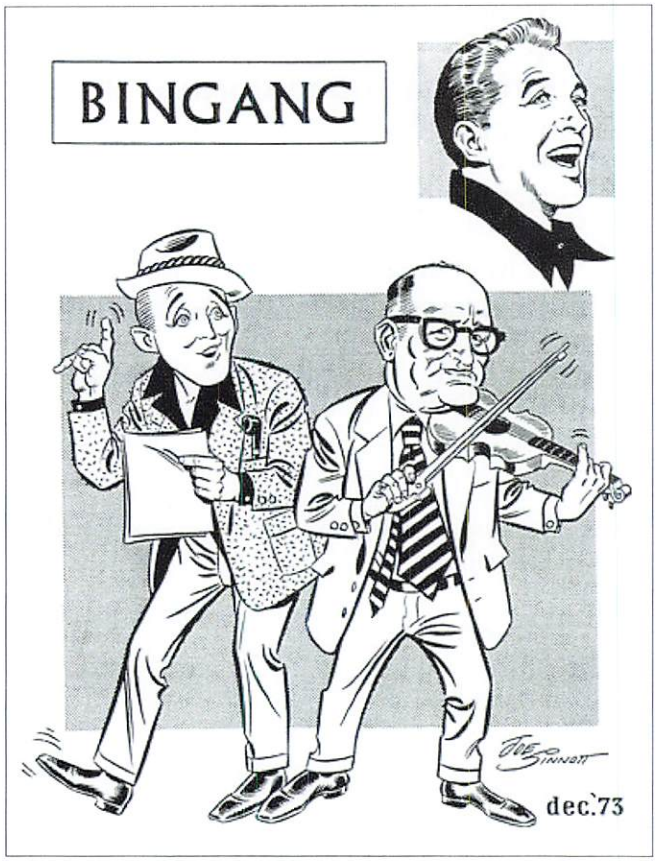
Bing Crosby House

The Crosby House is still closed due to Covid-19. At the end of August, Gonzaga University welcomed students back to campus. Everyone, including the Crosby statue, was wearing face coverings!

Joe Sinnott

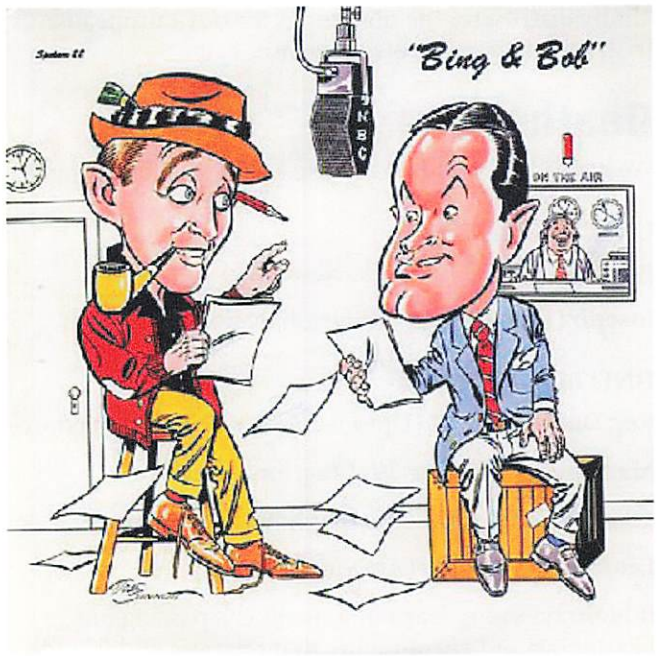
Joe Sinnott, the famous comic book artist died on June 25 at the age of 93.

Joe was a lifelong Crosby fan having first become aware of Bing in his early teens because his mother was hooked on a daily recorded Crosby show on WNEW. His mother used to sing-along with the groaner and it left Joe with a preference for songs and recordings from the 1939 era. During WWll when Joe was a Navy Seabee, he met Bing on a street in Hollywood coming out of a tobacco shop stuffing his pipe. The autograph he got that day in 1945 remained one of Joe's most treasured possessions. He was a long-time member of Club Crosby and then the ICC. He helped us with covers for BINGANG and he produced many LP covers for Larry Kiner's Spokane issues.



Joe Sinnott was a veteran of World War II, serving with the US Navy Seabees on Okinawa, Japan. For his service he was awarded the Asiatic Pacific medal, the American Theatre World War II Victory Medal, and the Navy occupation medal.

In 1950, he started work as an artist for Marvel Comics and continued with them until his retirement in 1992. He continued to work as a freelance artist for King Features Syndicate from 1992 to 2019, inking the Sunday "The Amazing Spider-Man" newspaper strip. His art appeared in numerous Marvel comics. "The Fantastic Four" and "Thor" were among Joe's most notable books. Joe was instrumental in inking the very first appearance of some of Marvel's most iconic

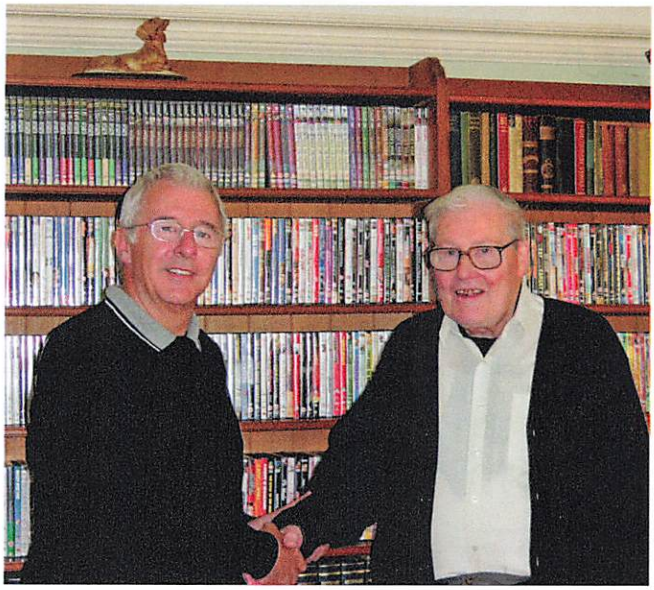


characters including Thor, Dr. Doom, Silver Surfer, Galactus and Black Panther. He also illustrated the life of The Beatles, Pope John Paul II, Pope John XXIII, and Mother Teresa, among others, for Dell and Treasure Chest Comics. His comic art awards include the 1967 and 1968 Alley Awards (as the comic book industry's best inker), the 1995 Inkpot Award, The Inkwell Awards Joe Sinnott Hall of Fame Award (named in his honor), The Will Eisner Award in 2013 (also known as the Comic Book Hall of Fame Award, the industry's highest honor), and in 2000 he was honored by the comic industry for 50 years in comics. Joe enjoyed illustrating baseball and football players, many for charitable organizations. Three of his drawings reside at the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY.

Reg Davis

We are also sorry to report the passing of our former UK editor Reg Davis in February at the age of 92.

When The British Bing Club was launched in 1950, the first three issues of the club magazine – "Crosbyana" - were edited by Art Allen and then in January 1951 all club officers received a missive telling them that Art had to step down as Editor and that **Reg Davis** would be taking over. Reg headed his editorial page as "Ain't Doin' Bad Doin' Nothin'" which must have been a gross understatement and eventually in the July-August 1951 edition, Reg announced that his good friend Geoff Milne (now aged 95 and still going strong) was going to assist him. In 1952, the magazine was edited jointly by Reg and Geoff until April 1953 when Art Allen returned to the fray and the club changed its name to The Crosby Society and the magazine was renamed "Crosby Post".



The Editor for 2005 (left) meets the Editor for 1951

I had the pleasure of meeting Reg in 2005 and found him charming, friendly and still a Crosby man at heart.

Reg Davis had a laid-back style and many of his editorials contained an apology for the late arrival of the magazine. I particularly liked this excuse in the first issue of 1952.

> *Since it is normal for devout persons to abstain from something or other during Lent, and as the editors feel sure that the members would all prefer to be classed in that category, we decided that the members would prefer not to receive a copy of this magazine during Lent but instead would rather receive it as our Easter offering.*

The Christmas 1951 editorial made me smile too.

> *Horror of horrors, Christmas is already upon us with its attendant confusion and chaos: it finds two harassed editors knee deep in paper and dripping with duplicating ink, fighting against the clock and generally working like company directors who have just been threatened with nationalisation. However we have succeeded in producing some results and now it is up to the GPO to ensure that once again you will be able to while away a pleasant five minutes over this issue before returning it to the salvage heap from whence it came.*

Lovely stuff! We owe a huge debt to Reg Davis and his various colleagues for the groundwork they laid in those far off years.

Malcolm Macfarlane

National Garden of American Heroes

The **National Garden of American Heroes** is a proposed monument to "great figures of America's history", planned through executive order by President Donald Trump. The garden, along with a Task Force for Building and Rebuilding Monuments to American Heroes, was announced on July 3, 2020 at the Independence Day celebration event at Mount Rushmore in South Dakota. In his speech, Mr. Trump described the proposed monument as "a vast outdoor park that will feature the statues of the greatest Americans to ever live." The garden is slated to include statues of notable political figures, activists, business people, and pop culture icons.

One of our members, Vicki Webster from Cincinnati, suggested that a statue of Bing should be included in the proposed park and after Perry Huntoon had liaised with Robert Bader of Bing Crosby Enterprises, it was agreed that Perry and American Co-Editor Anton would submit a letter to the relevant authorities. The letter they drafted was as follows:

"David Bernhardt
Secretary of the Interior
1849 C Street N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Bernhardt,

In view of President Trump's recently signed Executive Order establishing a National Garden of American Heroes and establishing an Interagency Task Force for Building and Rebuilding Monuments to American Heroes to be chaired by the Secretary of the Interior, I propose that a statue of Bing Crosby be included in the National Garden.

Far from just being the most popular entertainer in music, radio and films during the first half of the 20th Century, Bing was a genuine hero and deserves lasting recognition for his role in maintaining morale of our fighting troops during World War II. Unlikely to be drafted for active service in the military, Bing contributed greatly to the war effort by maintaining a grueling schedule of bond tours and USO tours culminating in a seven-week trip to Europe after D-Day to visit the troops in England and on the frontlines in France. These efforts, together with his recording of White Christmas *– the largest selling single recording ever, served to greatly boost the morale of our fighting forces. This effort was recognized and highly appreciated by the military command up to and including General Eisenhower. In April 1948, General Mark Clark presented Bing with the Presidential Certificate of Merit for "outstanding fidelity and meritorious conduct in aid of the war effort during World War II." Crosby's portrayal of Father O'Malley in "Going My Way" and "The Bells of St. Mary's" netted him two nominations for best actor and one Oscar for his heartwarming depiction of a man strong in his faith and convictions. All of this culminated in his being voted "The Most Famous Living Person" in a poll conducted by Jimmie Fidler for his ABC radio show.*

A lasting monument to Bing would fit in beautifully with those already nominated by President Trump. As the American representative of the International Club Crosby and with the support of the Crosby family, I urge you to strongly consider adding his name to the list of honorees for the National Garden."

Developments are awaited.

A New Crosby Song

Almost by accident your Editor came across a listing of the Meredith Willson papers at:
https://songbook.accesstomemory.org/downloads/meredith-willson-papers.pdf

File 84 contained a lacquer disc of Bing singing "Here Comes the Springtime". Knowing nothing about this song, I approached Michael Feinstein as he had recently featured the Meredith Willson collection on Facebook. Michael kindly faciliated access for me to the archive and I was able to listen to the song. It was obviously the early 50s Crosby voice and done for radio. The clue came at the end when Bing said "Thanks, Marilyn." This encouraged me to look at the Chesterfield show of April 11, 1951 when Marilyn Maxwell was a guest. There is a song called "Ho! Diddly Hi! Diddly Hey" listed which in fact should have been shown as "Here Comes the Springtime (And There Goes My Heart)." Lionel Pairpoint had not known the correct title when he put his wonderful radio book together. So it wasn't an unknown song after all and in fact Fran Warren recorded in 1951. I have amended all our records on the BING magazine web pages to show the correct title.

However, while I was in the site I did a general search against Bing and it threw up a recording of a song in the Johnny Burke collection called "You've Been Looking through My Dreams" written by Burke and Van Heusen for "Road to Bali". I had never heard it before and it's a pleasant enough song. Further investigation showed that press releases in April 1952 listed the song but as we know it was not used in the film. The press releases in April 1952 also listed a song called "The Jungle Wedding March" but not "To See You Is to Love You".

It would appear therefore that the latter song replaced "You've Been Looking through My Dreams" as the love ballad in the film.

Sharing this information with John Newton, he amazed me by sending the label from his copy of the recording! The song "To See You Is to Love You" is on the reverse side. John went on to tell me that he hadn't played the record in years and he went on to say why.

"I can't access my turntable right now, the result of my "music room" being in total disarray following some water damage during hurricane and storm activity during early August. Much in the room had to be moved, with things piled up haphazardly and preventing me from getting at some things. Not a single Bing record was damaged in any way, and I obviously still have access to certain shelves. This very morning I am expecting a call from a contractor who will be correcting the damage in the near future, thereafter allowing me to once again utilize my turntable. Earlier this month, I had to perform an anniversary activity using a small, old portable record player that I usually avoid at all costs. Every year on September 2nd, I go to my 12-inch Bing shelf and take my Victor test pressings of Bing's first CBS broadcast to play them in remembrance. Just a small "mental thing" with me."

It's amazing what turns up!

Internet Sites

BING Magazine
This contains a considerable amount of reference material all of which is being updated as new information arises. See **www.bingmagazine.co.uk**

Crosby Fan World
This bulletin board type site is at:
http://crosbyfanworld.boardhost.com/
Mature and knowledgeable contributions are being made and the site is sensibly moderated by Richard Baker.

Bing Crosby House

@Bingconstantly *and* **@Bing_Crosby**

please follow **'bingsings'**

Other Appreciation Societies

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

Memory Lane
www.memorylane.org.uk
P. O. Box 1939, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3UH, England
The acclaimed quarterly magazine for lovers of 1920s, 1930s and 1940s music. A "*must*" for 78 RPM collectors. Initial annual subscription only £10 (UK) or £15 (overseas) for readers of BING magazine. (Normal price £16 - UK, £22 - overseas.)

Sinatra Music Society
www.sinatramusicsociety.com
Mrs. Pat Harvey, National Secretary, 11 Mossbank Avenue, Burntwood, Staffordshire WS7 4UN, UK
Tel: 01543-899771

The Society was founded in 1955. A quarterly magazine called *Perfectly Frank* is issued. Fees within the UK are £15 a year; £19 for European membership and £23 for the rest of the world.

Bing's Lager Commercial

Ann Fotheringham writing in the Scottish *Glasgow Times* some time ago mentioned that Bing may have filmed a lager commercial in Glasgow. I noticed this and dropped her a line with the following result in the July 1st edition of the newspaper.

"...We also ran a Famous Faces feature about legendary Hollywood crooner Bing Crosby, who was golfing in Scotland and may or may not have filmed a lager commercial in Glasgow.

Malcolm Macfarlane, editor of BING Magazine, got in touch to put the record straight.

"You are right, Bing did not film a commercial for Tennent's in Glasgow," he told us. "According to my research, the commercial was filmed during the morning of July 3, 1975 at the Black Bull Inn at Straiton, Ayrshire.

"Bing first visited Glasgow on August 25, 1944. He had arrived by ship at Greenock and then caught a train to London. Large crowds were at the station to see him catch the overnight train."

Malcolm adds: "He spent the next six weeks entertaining the troops in France and on October 1, he and Fred Astaire returned to Glasgow by train to catch a ship back to the USA. Again large crowds were at the station."

Were you or a relative there to see Fred and Bing in Glasgow?

Filming the commercial

I had asked if the newspaper's archives had anything about the 1944 visits but unfortunately Ann cannot access the print archives at present.
The commercial itself can be seen on YouTube at **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0f56RFrhNVY**

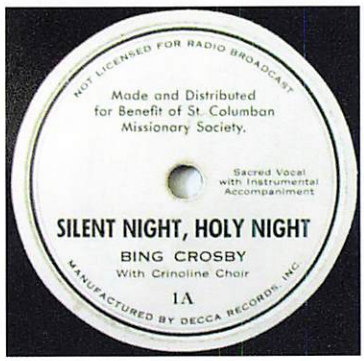
That Christmas Feeling:
Bing Crosby's Lesser-Known Decca Holiday Sides

Anton reminds us of some of Bing's rarer Christmas songs.

No two people have altered our conception and enjoyment of the holiday season more profoundly than Charles Dickens in the nineteenth century and Bing Crosby in the twentieth. Dickens's Christmas books—and particularly the classic *A Christmas Carol*, first published in 1843—put the emphasis on tradition and core human values that the season represented for him in a time of mechanization and incipient capitalism that was the Victorian era. Starting in the mid-1930s, Crosby carried that torch not only by inaugurating the popular trend of recording Christmas songs but actually by single-handedly starting a practice that would quickly evolve into a multi-million dollar business and a genre unto itself within pop music.

So pervasive is the influence of Bing Crosby on the way that people worldwide perceive and imagine the holiday season that it seems almost impossible to believe that there was ever a time when his baritone didn't warm up our festivities with its soft crooning sound. Crosby's voice has become as much a part of the Christmas tradition as Santa Claus, fir trees, mistletoe, and holly, and over the decades, myriads of singers of all styles and backgrounds have followed his lead and have released their own collections of Yuletide songs old and new. While many of the tunes Bing introduced or popularized on records, radio, film, and television ("White Christmas," "Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town," "Silver Bells," anyone?) are mainstays of the Christmas songbook, there are several that remain more obscure and that are seldom played. Fortunately, we have the two-CD set *The Voice of Christmas* (MCA / Universal, 1998) supervised by the late Crosby enthusiast and ICC member Wig Wiggins and containing Bing's entire holiday output on Decca. And it's precisely on the lesser-known gems that I wish to concentrate for the remainder of my article.

It is interesting to note that due to his religious beliefs and perhaps also to his natural modesty, at first Crosby was not too keen on committing traditional carols to wax. In fact, he only agreed to record "Silent Night" and "Adeste Fideles" after ensuring that any earnings produced by these recordings would be destined for charity. This early version of "Silent Night" from 1935, with its subtle, minimalist arrangement and the orchestra and choir conducted by Georgie Stoll, is a particularly satisfying performance much sought after by collectors.



Bing's most enduring contributions to the Christmas canon would not really begin until the 1940s, spearheaded by the Irving Berlin-penned "White Christmas," from the 1942 Crosby-Astaire classic film *Holiday Inn*, whose "A" take is interesting for the slight mistake that Bing makes towards the end of the recording and that made it necessary for a second take to be attempted and eventually released.

The years of World War II, before and after the armistice, were particularly prolific for Bing the holiday singer. Songs such as "I'll Be Home for Christmas" and Mel Torme's "The Christmas Song," the latter popularized by Nat King Cole, struck a chord with servicemen who were away from home and their loved ones. Alongside these classics, we find lesser-known titles such as the traditional "O Fir Tree Dark," with a beautiful Ken Darby arrangement that supports Crosby's voice perfectly, and "You're All I Want for Christmas," co-written by the singer-pianist Seger Ellis and brought to life in its full splendor by Bing with the assistance of Victor Young. Crosby closed out the 1940s by doing precisely what he had been remiss to do fourteen years earlier: putting together a series of Christmas carols ("Deck the Halls," "Away in a Manger," "Good King Wenceslas," and others) and releasing them this time in a medley format simply as "Christmas Carols." The rather forgotten Simon Rady was on hand on that occasion to handle the orchestra and choir.

Johnny Burke, who had been writing songs for Bing since the early '30s, was responsible for one of Crosby's first Christmas outings of the 1950s, "That Christmas Feeling," with appropriately nostalgic lyrics by Jimmy Van Heusen and a melody that fits our man's baritone like a glove. By now Christmas songs had become next of kin to winter-themed numbers, which is precisely why in just a few years Dean Martin would be issuing a fine Capitol concept album like *A Winter Romance*, containing both winter and holiday tunes. Bing was no stranger to the idea, as we can observe from recordings such as the easy-swinging "Looks Like a Cold, Cold Winter" and the delightful "A Marshmallow World," which is a lovely performance despite the slightly mickey-mouse quality of parts of the arrangement. Crosby also gets to explore his Irish roots on "Christmas in Killarney"—boisterous it is, as Wig rightly reminds us, but it is a fun record nonetheless, and one cannot imagine the holiday season being any other way on the Emerald Isle after listening to Bing's joyful enthusiasm!

Crosby also cut his own version of the Leroy Anderson-Mitchell Parish classic "Sleigh Ride," but much more obscure remains the other sleighing song he did around the same time: "Sleigh Bell Serenade," by Sonny Burke and Paul Francis Webster, a jumpy little number full of pizzicato that finds Bing irresistibly relaxed.

By 1955, Crosby had been collaborating closely on radio and records with jazz keyboardist Buddy Cole, and it is precisely Cole that handles the baton as Bing harmonizes with Jud Conlon's Rhythmaires on "Christmas Is A-Comin'." The song, with its old-timey feel, comes from the pen of the prolific Kansas singer, songwriter, and playwright Frank Luther. Burke and Webster return to provide what is perhaps one of the most enduring of these lesser-known Decca gems: "The First Snowfall," another one of those nostalgic ballads that finds Der Bingle reminiscing about romanticized visions of childhood that make for perfect inspiration for this type of material. Again, it is more of a winter-themed song that prefigures the arrival of Christmas, and Crosby's sincerity here is deeply moving. The quasi-philosophical "Is Christmas Only a Tree", written by two nuns who used the name Mark Rebek as a pseudonym, is yet another meditation on the meaning of Christmas given the full orchestral treatment and sung most convincingly by Bing.

During his tenure with Decca, Crosby recorded quite a few duets, though perhaps not as many as some fans would have liked, and of course a handful of them were holiday-themed numbers. Bing's collaborations with the Andrews Sisters on "Jingle Bells" and "Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town" were so popular that we often forget that they also attempted more obscure titles like Gene Autry's "Here Comes Santa Claus" and particularly Burke and Van Heusen's "Poppa Santa Claus," a children's song that is sure to delight all the young'uns in the household. For the 1950 holiday season, Bing returned to the medley concept, enlisting his sons on this occasion for a two-part release that uses "That Christmas Feeling" as a leitmotiv and includes other Burke-Van Heusen songs such as "I'd Like to Hitch a Ride with Santa Claus" and "The Snowman." Though obviously scripted, Bing makes it all feel natural, and

Gary sounds particularly good harmonizing with his old man on "That Christmas Feeling."

With his friend Peggy Lee under contract to Decca in the early '50s, it was inevitable (and most welcome indeed) that Bing would engage in some duetting with her. Their hip 1952 reading of "Little Jack Frost Get Lost" (credited, again, to Seger Ellis as co-writer) is wonderful but unfortunately a little too brief. Luckily, two years later, Lee was on hand for the studio version of Irving Berlin's "Snow," from the 1954 movie *White Christmas*, and she joins Danny Kaye, Trudy Stevens, and Bing for a spirited version of yet another under-recorded winter-themed tune.

Just as Bing Crosby as an artist is much more than a mere interpreter of Christmas songs, his holiday output goes well beyond his million-selling recording of "White Christmas." As we have seen, by simply scratching the surface slightly, we easily find a varied group of sides that have somehow slipped through the cracks and that aren't as well remembered as his more enduring and influential classic Christmas hits. Listening to Crosby's fine slew of Decca Yuletide discs always feels like taking a trip with Dickens's Ghost of Christmas Past. And by digging these rare gems out, dusting them off, and rediscovering them, we may understand and appreciate even better the artistic stature and the rich legacy of a man who is, indeed, the voice of Christmas.

Anton Garcia-Fernandez *antongarciafdez@gmail.com*

Dixie Lee Junction

Chris Hammond looks at the early years of Dixie Lee Crosby.

From the Knoxville News-Sentinel dated October 30, 1930.

"My real name is Wilma Wyatt, but as a child I was always called 'Billie.' I was born in Harriman, Tennessee, on November 4, 1911. Until I was 4 I lived in Knoxville. We then moved to Memphis, where I lived until I was 11 years old; after that, we went to New Orleans, until I was 14, and finally I lived in Chicago until I was 17 years old, when my theatrical career began."

These words were penned by Dixie Lee Crosby in a mini biography she sent to Edward J. Meeman, the editor for the Knoxville News-Sentinel newspaper in Knoxville, Tennessee, at the time. It is interesting to note that she was actually not born in 1911, but rather in 1909. Several sources confirm this: the 1910 and 1920 U.S. Censuses, a handwritten letter from Dixie, newspaper articles, and the program from her first public performance. The question is why did she change it? While to some, this may be a trivial topic to use to debut a new column for this prestigious publication, but taking a closer look at this fact gives us more insight into Dixie's career and who she was as a person.

Dixie Lee was born Wilma Winifred Wyatt, in the quaint, peaceful little town of Harriman in the mountains of East Tennessee. She was born in her maternal grandfather's modest wooden house located in the historic Walnut Hill neighborhood. Her mother's family were the Scarbrough's. James Alexander Scarbrough and Louisa Evelyn Vann Scarbrough, Dixie's grandparents, lived on the corner of Oak and Walnut Streets. It is worth noting that there are different spelling variations of the family name Scarbrough, including Scarborough and Scarboro, depending on the source. The family tombstones mostly use Scarbrough, which suggests that this was the way the family preferred to spell it. However, Dixie's death certificate has it spelled Scarborough, with Bing being the informant. The Scarbrough's were originally from the community of Scarboro, which is present-day Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and is thought to have been named after one of Dixie's ancestors.

Her father's family were the Wyatt's, who hailed from around the same area as the Scarbrough's in Anderson and Roane counties. Her father, Evan Evans Wyatt, was a veteran and musician of the United States Army and an insurance agent. At the time of Dixie's birth, he had gone north to see about a job while her mother, Nora Scarbrough Wyatt, and Dixie's two older sisters, Nava and Ida, went to stay with Nora's parents while he was away. The month and day of Dixie's birth (November 4th) have always been consistently given and documented. However, the year varies depending on the source. The lack of an official birth certificate

complicates the issue further. The 1910 and 1920 censuses support the 1909 year. The 1910 census was taken on April 19, 1910 and lists her as "Baby Wyatt" and only being a few months old. The 1920 census lists her age as 10 with the census taken on January 2, 1920.

Also, there is a letter that she wrote on May 7, 1930, to a member of the media that is in my possession. In it she stated "I was born in Tennessee, Wilma (Billie) Wyatt, Nov. 4th, 1909."

We see her first switch up the year to 1911 in late 1930. Interestingly enough, this is around the same time that she married a little known up-and-coming crooner named Harry Lillis Crosby, Jr. Yes, our beloved Bing! Dixie was on the cusp of becoming one of Fox's leading ladies.

The young couple

The studio definitely had big plans for her. It is estimated that she made at least 19 films over her short career, most with Fox. The exact number may not ever be known due to many of the early Fox talkies being lost in the Vault Fire of 1937 and many of her roles being uncredited. They did not like the idea or approve of her marrying Bing. One of the studio executives purportedly told her that she would have to support him the rest of her life if she married him. Back then, the large studios had an ironclad grip and control over their stars, especially the women. They could tell an actress how much to weigh, what color they could dye their hair, who to date, and who to marry. While this type of control and micromanagement was also exerted on their male actors as well, the women typically received the worst of it.

It is worth noting that at the time, Bing was in the wilder days of his youth and the very early stages of his career. He hadn't become the global superstar that we came to know him as. I'm sure if Fox had known the entertainment phenomenon that he would go on to become, they wouldn't have objected to the marriage. In fact, they might have strongly encouraged it. In the end, their opinion didn't matter to Dixie. She was not one to let others dictate how she lived her life and she didn't let the studio deter her in the slightest. She loved Bing and wanted to spend the rest of her life with him, even if that meant she had to give up her career. Back then for a young, up-and-coming actress to rebel against a studio was almost certainly career suicide. While Fox didn't initially flat out fire her, it appears they certainly altered their plans for her.

Dixie went from receiving top supporting roles at the studio to being given uncredited roles. She was even loaned out to Paramount Pictures to make "No Limit" with superstar, Clara Bow, in 1931. Fox ultimately declined to give her another contract and she began freelancing with other studios. This is where the shaving off of a couple of years would have been to her benefit. By appearing to be 18 years old, instead of 20 years old, another studio might be more likely to give her a new contract. While her decision to marry Bing likely contributed to cutting her career short, it was also very courageous and admirable, even by today's standards.

Dixie in the Fox film "Happy Days" (1929) when she was the lead dancer in the 'Crazy Feet' number

So where did her stage name Dixie Lee come from? While on the surface it may appear that it has something to do with the U.S. Civil War, the truth is actually a lot more simple, and practical. In May of 1928, Billie, as Wilma Wyatt preferred to be called, entered and won a singing contest in Chicago. The bright eyed, spunky 18-year-old had entered the contest on a whim after it was advertised in the local newspaper.

Dixie later recalled in a 1947 interview with New York columnist Earl Wilson the following account of the contest: "I was in school in Chicago and wanted to quit so I took singing lessons. One day Daddy brought in a paper and said 'There's an amateur contest tonight and you're in it.' My name was Billie Wyatt, but I changed it so all of the kids wouldn't know it was me if I lost. Ruth Etting, a judge, voted for me. I was so lousy and nervous, I guess she knew I was the only real amateur in the amateur contest."

She changed it to Dixie Carroll initially. Interestingly, even though she had changed her name for the contest, after she won it she was actually referred to as her true name, Billie Wyatt, in the Chicago Tribune. However, she did continue to be billed and referred to as Dixie Carroll. Her prize for winning this contest was a six week contract to perform at the College Inn in the Sherman Hotel in downtown Chicago. This performance led to her being discovered by The New York Company, where she went on to make her debut on Broadway in the play "Good News" in the fall of 1928. It was there that she was discovered by a Fox Film representative. This is when we first see the name Dixie Lee emerge. Actresses Sue Carol and Nancy Carroll were already well established in Hollywood when Dixie arrived, so to avoid confusion with other actresses Fox had her drop the Carroll and add Lee. The town that Dixie was born in (Harriman, Tennessee) is in close proximity to the Dixie Lee Junction (the point where the Dixie Highway and Lee Highway intersect). So, the changing from Carroll to Lee was most likely done as a homage to Dixie's birthplace and Tennessee roots, and it was just as much practical as it was intentional. The Knoxville Journal reported her initial contract with Fox was for five years and worth $250 per week, with a $50 weekly raise every six months. She made her big screen debut in Fox's "Movietone Follies of 1929" and the rest is history. She remained active in film in Hollywood for the next seven years when she retired from the spotlight all together in 1935 to fully devote herself to Bing and their four boys.

Chris Hammond

(Editor: Chris Hammond is an East Tennessee teacher and local history enthusiast who, along with Dixie's granddaughter, also named Dixie Lee, went to great lengths to have a historical marker about Dixie approved by the Tennessee Historical Commission.)

The Greatest Song Writer Who Ever Lived

Lorne Harasen looks at the man who had a huge impact on Bing's career.

The great George Gershwin once said that Irving Berlin was the greatest song writer who ever lived. Jerome Kern, no slouch himself as a writer of songs, said Irving Berlin has no place in American music, he is American music!

There doesn't seem to be general agreement about the precise location where he was born except for the fact that he was born in Imperial Russia. Israel Baline who became Irving Berlin came to the United States in 1893 at the age of five. The writer of "White Christmas", the greatest selling record of all time, wrote some 1500 songs including his first hit "Alexander's Ragtime Band", as well as "God Bless America", "Easter Parade", "There's No Business Like Show Business", to name a few. Apparently Berlin couldn't read or write music. He hummed his tunes to a music secretary or played them less than perfectly on the black keys of a piano.

When Berlin was asked how he, a Jew, could write a Christmas song he said he did so as an American. In fact it is said that he didn't celebrate Christmas and reportedly he and Ellin, his Catholic wife, every Christmas Day visited the grave of a three week old baby son who had died on a Christmas Eve.

"White Christmas" first sung by Bing Crosby in the movie "Holiday Inn" was almost written as a spoof or filler. It was felt that "Be Careful It's My Heart" was going to be the hit. At first Crosby didn't see the potential in "White Christmas". It took him 18

With Irving Berlin in 1941

minutes to record it and he is the whistler in the second chorus. Crosby sang the song from the perspective of a northerner stranded in California on Christmas Eve. The song was supposed to begin with the words:

The sun is shining, the grass is green, the Orange and Palm trees sway. There's never been such a day in Beverly Hills L.A. but it's December the 24th and I'm longing to be up north.

Bing's early recordings did not include those lines but in his 1975 and 1976 Christmas shows he re-introduced them. In the 1975 show, Fred Astaire sings them leading Bing to announce that he does not recognise the song. He is then shown the sheet music and, professing embarrassment, he goes on to sing the song.

"White Christmas" won the Academy Award in 1942 and the presenter was Irving Berlin himself who opened the envelope and said he knew the song writer very well.

The master of the recording was said to be damaged by over use so it was redone in 1947 with the addition of a flute and celesta. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour the American mood had changed and "White Christmas" prompted a sadder emotional response especially among people who had a connection to the armed services.

Bing was reluctant to sing "White Christmas" for the troops because he hated to see the men cry but they kept insisting that he sing it. He was also concerned that he might burst into tears himself.

In my conversations with Bing about the great Christmas song, he always said he was "eternally grateful" to Berlin for making the song available to him. There is some disagreement about which recording in history is the actual best seller but suffice it to say that "White Christmas" has been a phenomenal success. I don't know who said it but I agree that "to say that White Christmas is iconic is like saying the Grand Canyon is a hole."

Many years after the great song writer wrote the song Irving Berlin sent a note to Bing Crosby which reads as follows:

"It's a little late after almost 27 years to send you a fan letter about White Christmas but I heard you sing it last night on the Hollywood Palace Show. Not only were you first, but you remain the best."

The closest I ever came to meeting Irving Berlin was on a tour boat on the mighty Canadian St. Lawrence River at St. Lawrence Park among the Thousand Islands where the summer home of the Berlins was pointed out. It had belonged to friend and business associate, Columbia Pictures President Max Winslow whose family owned the green and white cottage for 70 years. Berlin named it "Always" after the title of one of his hit songs. The statue of the RCA Victor Dog and Phonograph was situated in the front yard.

Ellin Berlin died in 1988 at age 85. Irving died in 1989 at age 101. They had been married for 63 years and had 4 children.

Lorne Harasen

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entires. Please send all advertisements to the Editor.

Roger Addey Swallowdale, 17 Tehidy Gardens, Camborne, Cornwall TR14 0ET, UK (Phone: 01209-718326)

"I am writing for help in disposing of some of my collection. I am getting on in years and may have to reduce the amount of CDs, tapes and books that I have which I wouldn't like anyone to throw away, when someone else might find then interesting. I don't, of course, want anything for them but perhaps money could be given to the ICC or a charity instead."

Roger tells me that he looking to dispose of 17 DVDs (including 5 Road films, The Country Girl. Connecticut Yankee etc,) some LPs (Feels Good, Feels Right; Bing & The Music Maids; Bing Sings Broadway; Music, Music, Music; etc), some CDs (a lot of the Sepia releases), 5 books (The Crosby Years by Ken Barnes; The Authorized Biography by Charles Thompson; etc) and many reel to reel tapes (including the "Tenth Anniversary Collection" in a box). Whilst he is happy to give the items away, he would, of course, need to have the postage costs covered. If you are looking for anything in particular, please call Roger.

John Bassett "Bingville", 15 Oast Way, Rochford, Essex SS4 1RZ, UK

STILL WANTED: The following UK 7" vinyl records are required in good condition. Please state prices and postage costs.

Brunswick 45rpm singles: 45-05244, 45-05269

MGM 45rpm EP: ES 3515 "Bing and Satchmo" – Stereo issue only.

10" Brunswick LPs: LA8578 "Road to Bali", LA8584 "The Quiet Man" and LA8728 "Curtain Call, Vol. 2".

Michael Crampton details on inside front cover.

Michael still has copies of "The Definitive Bing Crosby Discography" by Wig Wiggins and Jim Reilly. £10 + postage (£3 in UK, £11.65 worldwide). Proceeds will go to the ICC funds.

Crosby Clubs Around the World

The ICC is very pleased to be associated with the Australian Bing Crosby Society. The society's details are:

The Australian Bing Crosby Society
Peter De Ryk, 11 Holden Rd., Kallista, Victoria 3791, Australia (tel:[03] 9755 3013 email: deryk@net2000.com.au)

Bi-monthly newsletters are issued by the Society and they can now be received in PDF form by email if desired. The film night in August had to be cancelled because of the dreaded virus but further dates scheduled for film nights this year are October 20 and December 8.

Books 'n' Bing

The Incredible Crosby *By Barry Ulanov, published in 1948 by Whittlesey House. 337 pages.*

American co-editor Anton was discussing essential books about Bing with your Editor some time ago and I suggested that this 1948 book by Barry Ulanov would be a useful start.

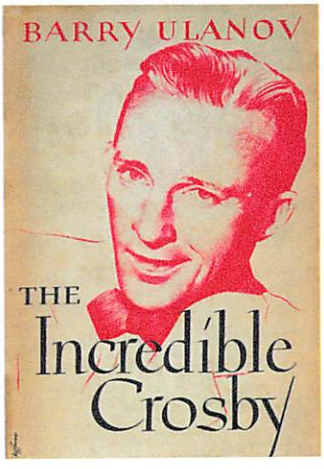
Mr. Ulanov (April 10, 1918 – April 30, 2000) was an American writer, perhaps best known as a jazz critic. He was editor of the journal "Metronome" from 1943 to 1955. His first book, published in 1946, was about Duke Ellington, and then he turned his attention to Bing.

The first part of the preface to his book is well-worth reading.

"My first personal contacts with Bing Crosby, on the Paramount lot and at the NBC studios in Hollywood, in May, 1944, were brief but stimulating. Restricted to a couple of question-and-answer periods and corollary exchanges of dialogue, they were all that was necessary to fill in the lacunae in a story on Bing that I was writing for my magazine, and to provoke much more interest on my part in the subject of the story. As no other Hollywood luminary, Bing's person was elusive. Arresting as his personality was, its existence was almost entirely on celluloid, on shellac, and through the ether. I determined to bring the figure to earth, if it could be done. A serious, full-length biography seemed the logical means of investiture for the disembodied screen, record, and radio spirit, if the spirit were willing.

Typically, Bing answered a question with a query. "So many fan magazines and newspapers have combed over my drab background," he wrote me, "that the subject seems to me to be exhausted. Lots of things have happened during the last fifteen years which would be interesting—if I could remember them, and if they weren't censorable."

That was in the fall of 1945. When I next saw Bing, in January, 1946, upon his return to the Kraft Music Hall program in Hollywood, his interest was considerably enlarged and more positive. From then on, his cooperation was tacit; he suffered my hovering motions around sound stages and radio studios, dressing rooms at Paramount, NBC and ABC, his Sunset Boulevard offices, and at recording sessions. A man of singular reticence where his own life and times are concerned, a startlingly but genuinely modest person, Bing was most voluble about music and musicians, increasingly silent as discussions grew closer to himself."



Ulanov's book was the first, in my opinion, to attempt to thoroughly research Bing's life and it avoided the usual publicity sources. He met many of the people close to Bing and even went to Spokane to interview his grade-school teachers and his Gonzaga classmates. Al Rinker, Mildred Bailey, Jimmy Van Heusen and Johnny Burke made contributions too. Unfortunately however he gave Bing's date of birth as 1901 which must have confused many people over the years. The book traces Bing's life through the Whiteman years with the Rhythm Boys and really comes into its own with Mr. Crosby's solo years.

There are a few mistakes but after all we have had another 70 years to carry on further research. This is a very readable account of Bing's career; it does not shy away from criticism and it looks carefully at Bing's vocal problems in the mid-1940s.

"Most of his records made in the second half of 1945 and through much of 1946 were disappointing. His top notes seemed to come with great difficulty; his phrasing was not as relaxed and certain as it had been in the past. . . . There was a clear uncertainty in Bing's work, and the blame for that could be laid at the door of his musical collaborators. For a long time during this so-called decline and fall, Bing was paired with various small groups on the Decca roster. Missing the sure baton and intelligent aid of John Scott Trotter, he had floundered between the notes of little units who were working with him to improve their fortune. The association with Bing was obviously more than just a shot in the arm for musical outfits on the way up, but unfortunately, though the collaboration was a hypodermic for their professional rating, it didn't help Bing. As he worked more and more with John Scott Trotter on the Philco show, made a few records with him, and began to work more regularly as a singer, his voice emerged from the dark clouds of poor colleagues. It shone again, and in his mid-1947 records, he was clearly an assured vocalist once more. Undoubtedly time has made some ravages upon the Crosby throat. His range has lowered, but it hasn't been cut. The lowering necessitates a new approach for a singer who was once a baritone with a tenor quality and some of the notes of the higher singer, who has now become a bass-baritone with a particularly secure lower register."

There are many quite rare photographs and a discography in alphabetical order which also lists many of the Decca and Columbia 78 albums. Copies can be found at a very reasonable cost on Amazon and on ABEbooks.

Finally, picking up the criticisms of Bing's singing in late 1945, early 1946, I have often wondered whether there was a problem with the recording equipment at Decca's New York studio. So many of his recordings recorded there at that time seem slow and to test this I speeded up "Just My Luck" by 4% and it's not so bad after all! Ridiculous I know, but Richard Baker and Jeremy Rose are investigating the matter and will report in the next issue.

Malcolm Macfarlane

Bing Crosby – A Lifetime of Music

This book by Laurence J. Zwisohn was published in 1978 by Palm Tree Library of Los Angeles. It's a 148 page discography with many interesting facts and figures included as well. It has a foreword by Jimmy Van Heusen and following suggestions by Dave Richards and Lachlan McLean, I am reproducing Mr. Van Heusen's words for you all to read.

Every one of the very, very few people who knew the late Bing Crosby well also knew him to possess certain characteristics. He was secretive….he was extremely generous with money….he was extremely religious…. he was strict with his family….and he was easily embarrassed.

He also had many likes and dislikes one of which was a definite distaste for mushy love lyrics. In the year 1940, when I first started to write for him, the late and great Johnny Burke had already been writing for him for four years beginning in 1936 with a score which included "Pennies from Heaven". In that early day when I first arrived in Hollywood Johnny sought to brief me on things I should know about Bing Crosby. The first thing we discussed was Bing's dislike of mushy love songs. As a result the first love song I wrote for him did not have the declarative statement "I love you" as part of its lyric and neither did any other of my love songs. Even in "Moonlight Becomes You" the lyric goes…."If I say I love you, I want you to know, etc."

The secretive side of Crosby was brought home to me for the umpteenth time a few months after his demise in Spain when I was taking part in a two hour memorial television program being produced by the American Broadcasting Company. ABC had sent a complete camera crew and producer and director to my home in Rancho Mirage, California (near Palm Springs) to prepare and film my small segment in the show which was called *Bing Crosby – His Life and Legend*. The producer was questioning me about things I might say and during this discourse mentioned that he had filmed Al Rinker and that he was unhappy about Bing's total neglect over all the years of his sister, Mildred Bailey. Now, Al Rinker was the man Bing started with and Mildred Bailey gave them money and got them their first jobs. To set the record straight I told the producer the following story.

Bing and Jimmy Van Heusen at work on Say One for Me

One evening I was at Frank Sinatra's house (when he was still married to Nancy) and we were about to run a movie when I received a telephone call. It was from Poughkeepsie, New York and on the phone was the celebrated composer, conductor Alec Wilder. He said that Mildred Bailey was deathly ill and in a ward in the hospital and didn't have money to pay either the doctor or the hospital. Would I go for the price of a private room? Yes, I said and also would go for the price of a doctor or anything else she needed. I walked into the playroom where the movies were about to be shown. Sinatra inquired about my phone call and when I told him the story I asked him if he would like to take half of my action. He said yes and from that moment on it was the both of us taking care of Mildred Bailey.

I was working on a Crosby picture at the time and the next day had to go to Paramount studios. Naturally, I bumped into Bing and of course I told him the story and asked if he'd like to be a three way partner. He said he would, of course. The bills from back east were coming to me and I think I got one or two bills and then they ceased coming. I suspected that Bing had taken over the whole thing and I confronted him with my sneaky hunch. I discovered that he had sent his accountant and lawyer back east to look over Mildred's situation and moved her across the country to St. John's Hospital in Santa Monica where she was put in the care of a physician who happened to be my doctor too, Dr. John Davis. Among other things he told me he had taken fifteen quarts of fluid off her chest. After she was well enough to be released Bing had secured a cute little house in Toluca Lake for her to live in. Every Christmas and birthday we came by with presents and she was out of the woods….all to the great goodness of Bing Crosby. The sadness of the story is that Mildred Bailey never told her brother, Al Rinker, what Bing had done for her….and, of course, secretive Bing never told the guy he started with, Al Rinker, that he saved his sister's life.

The last several pictures I wrote for Bing Crosby were collaborations with Sammy Cahn and at least one song, "Second Time Around", although written for Bing in *High Time*, is completely identified with Frank Sinatra. This is about the only time in the long career of Bing Crosby where another artist stole the thunder and popularized a song written especially for him.

Bing Crosby was an unassuming man and a master

of the understatement, and many people found him cold but I found him to be a faithful, devoted friend who was always there, particularly when the chips were down. I worked for him for 38 years and I loved and adored him those years and I will miss him very much for the remaining years that I walk the face of this Earth.

James Van Heusen

(Editor: Some very nice words from Mr. Van Heusen. The book itself has a number of other essays and one of these is about the song writers of Bing's recordings. A list is provided of the song writers who contributed the greatest number of songs for Bing. Here's the top few:
Johnny Burke 118
Jimmy Van Heusen 105
Irving Berlin 65
Johnny Mercer 46
Sammy Cahn 41
Leo Robin 34
Richard Rodgers 34
Cole Porter 28
Harry Warren 28
Oscar Hammerstein II 27
Gus Kahn 27)

Bing Crosby: Movie and TV Mogul

Martin McQuade looks at a very important part of Bing's business empire which we often tend to overlook.

Perhaps Bing's greatest name recognition comes by way of the Bing Crosby Productions banner (BCP) that concludes each broadcast of *Hogan's Heroes*, one of the most popular vintage TV shows in syndication today. This omnipresent series may be the crowning glory of BCP, which Bing formed in 1949, after developing a taste for producing with *The Great John L* (1945) and *Abie's Irish Rose* (1946). BCP was an outgrowth of Bing Crosby Enterprises, which spearheaded the development of magnetic tape recording in the late 40's, revolutionizing network radio. BCP's initial endeavors were in TV production. Anthology series *Crown Theater* (1952 -55) and *Rebound* (1952 - 53) led the effort. Many notable actors appeared on the filmed episodes. Lee Marvin made his TV debut on a *Rebound* entry.

BCP hit its stride with the launch of the medical series *Ben Casey* in Oct. 1961. This top-rated series became a media sensation, earning thirteen Emmy nominations and two Emmy awards during its five seasons. Bing allegedly discovered Vince Edwards, who portrayed Casey. Edwards would soon become a "TV idol." Sam Jaffe played Casey's superior, Dr. Zorba, and Franchot Tone replaced him, playing Dr. Freeland during the final season. Sydney Pollack and Irvin Kershner learned their craft by directing several episodes. David's Raksin's theme became a top 40 hit in the US.

Bing and Beverley Garland share cake with Vince Edwards on the set

Breaking Point, a spinoff of Ben Casey, debuted in Sept. 1963. Paul Richards portrayed the chief resident at a psychiatric clinic. Robert Redford declined BCP's offer of the lead, although the future star did appear in an early episode. Indeed, many acclaimed actors appeared through the first and only season. The series received one Emmy nomination. *Slattery's People*, dealing with local politicians, came along in Sept. 1964. This series, which ran for almost two seasons, launched Richard Crenna's dramatic career. He received two of the show's four Emmy nominations. The show dealt with local politicians, and attained a special distinction when U.S. Representative James C. Corman said in a *Congressional Record* statement on September 30, 1964, "I am pleased that they have taken the high road to show a legislator's life, and have not pandered to sensationalism or unreality to stimulate an audience following."

These series took risks in exploring ethical and social issues and advanced an intelligent approach to weekly TV drama. BCP also had a distinctively light side. Following Bing's own sitcom, *The Bing Crosby Show*, which ended after its only season in April 1965, *Hogan's Heroes* premiered on Sept. 17, 1965, and soon became a pop cultural phenomenon. A German POW camp must have seemed an incongruous setting for a sitcom, especially when millions of WW2 veterans were then approaching middle age. In fact, Robert Clary, who played one of the prisoners, spent 3 years in a concentration camp. BCP took a bold gamble that paid off in spades, due to the irreverent humor of its ensemble cast, with the ever-droll Bob Crane in the eponymous lead. The top-rated series earned 12 Emmy nominations, with Werner Klemperer winning

two best supporting actor awards for immortalizing Colonel Klink. The zaniness was contagious, spawning many similarly offbeat shows to come. One recurring phrase from John Banner's Sergeant Schultz has entered the lexicon. "I see nothing, I hear nothing, I know nothing." Paramount would unsuccessfully sue BCP for infringement, citing the program's likeness to *Stalag 17*.

Bing welcomes Bob Crane and the cast of 'Hogan's Heroes' to the Hollywood Palace on Christmas Day, 1965.

Each of these series from the 60's used the facilities of Desilu Studios, with which BCP had an affiliation. Early on, Bing expressed his interest in Desilu, as witness an entry from Bart Andrew's The "*I Love Lucy*" Book (Doubleday; 1985).

"As reported in Newsweek (February 18, 1952): 'Desilu's success has sent a stream of Hollywoodites to tour The Arnazes' soundstages. Among them…Bing Crosby, who told Lucille he would probably use the Desilu technique when he makes his long-awaited television debut.'"

According to Wikipedia's Desilu entry, "Desilu began the creation of its productions using conventional film studio materials, production, and processing techniques. The use of these materials and techniques meant that the 35 mm negatives (the source material for copyright purposes) were immediately available for production and distribution of prints when series went into syndication at local stations around the country. As such, no "lost" episodes of programs occurred, and no programs were recorded by kinescope from the television broadcast." Incidentally, while Desilu was perfecting the use of film on TV, Bing Crosby Electronics was pioneering the development of videotape recording.

BCP's subsequent TV efforts enjoyed diminishing success. The company filmed many pilots in the late 60's, and broadcast several on summer replacement series. One of these, *And Baby Makes Three* from 1966, features an early score by John Williams, then known as "Johnny." BCP rounded out the decade by branching out with *Beat the Odds*, a game show, and *Bright Promise*, a soap opera running for three seasons.

As the 60's ended, and with its TV series production on the wane, BCP undertook feature film production. Media giant Cox Broadcasting, having entered motion picture production in 1967, purchased BCP the same year in exchange for 36,500 shares of Cox common stock (then worth almost $2m). Bing himself was no longer involved but Basil Grillo, Bing's longtime business manager, continued as president of BCP. Cox' BCP unit oversaw a string of theatrical and TV films. Several of these enjoyed blockbuster success, such as *Ben, Willard and The Walking Tall* franchise. Phil Karlson, responsible for several films starring Kathryn Grant (Crosby), directed *Ben and Walking Tall*. Another of her directors, Richard Quine, helmed *W. The Great Santini* garnered two Oscar nominations: Robert Duvall for best actor and Michael O'Keefe for best supporting actor.

BCP ceased operations in 1979. In 1988, Cox incorporated BCP into the Rysher Corporation, at the time an established independently owned company. Rysher, a division of 2929 Entertainment, is the current owner of a large archive, including BCP's output, with distribution of most of its programs handled by CBS Television Scattering.

Of special interest is BCP's logo, which appears in separate colorful blocks that come down onto the screen, underscored by stentorian music. Some have called this orchestration somewhat ominous, and the logo has acquired the nickname "Crashing Cars." The monogramed banner has transformed over the years, to the delight of media marketing aficionados. One may find a thorough review of this trademark's evolution at: **http://closinglogos.wikifoundry.com/page/Bing+Crosby+Productions**

The accompanying filmography omits Bing's several feature films that BCP either totally or partially oversaw; i.e. *Road to Rio, Road to Bali, High Society, Man on Fire, Say One for Me, High Time*). Likewise, the TV log omits Bing's TV specials produced under the auspices of BCP from 1954 - 1963.

Bing Crosby Productions: TV Series/Pilots

1) *Crown Theater* (aka *The Gloria Swanson Show*) Dramatic anthology series; 3 seasons from Jan. 4, 1952 - 1955; Syndicated; 27 half-hour episodes; Gloria Swanson served as host and appeared in 4 episodes; Bing's business manager Basil F. Grillo credited as producer for 26 episodes from 1952 - 55
2) *Rebound*; Dramatic anthology series; broadcast for 2 seasons Feb. 8, 1952 - May 30, 1953 initially on ABC network, then on Dumont; 22 half-hour episodes; Grillo credited as executive producer/producer for 15 episodes from 1952 - 53; Syndication title was *Counterpoint*
3) *Ben Casey*; Medical drama w/Vince Edwards, Sam Jaffe, Franchot Tone; 5 seasons Oct. 2, 1961 - March 21, 1966;

ABC; 153 one-hour episodes

4) *Breaking Point*; Psychiatric Drama w/Paul Richards, Edward Franz;1 season Sept. 16, 1963 - April 27, 1964; ABC: 30 one-hour episodes (This series was a spinoff of Ben Casey)
5) *Vacation Playhouse*; Anthology comedy/drama summer replacement series showcasing pilot programs; 5 seasons July 22, 1963 - August 21, 1967; 50 half-hour episodes; co-produced with Desilu, Four Star Productions and Universal Television)
6) *The Bing Crosby Show* Sitcom w/Bing Crosby, Beverly Garland, Frank McHugh; 1 season Sept. 14, 1964 - April 19, 1965; ABC; 28 half-hour episodes
7) *Slattery's People*; Political drama w/Richard Crenna, Edward Asner, Paul Geary; 2 seasons Sept 21, 1964 - Nov. 28, 1965; CBS; 36 one-hour episodes; co-produced with Crenna's Pendick Productions and CBS
8) *Hogan's Heroes*; Sitcom w/Bob Crane, Werner Klemperer, John Banner, Robert Clary, Ivan Dixon, Richard Dawson, Larry Hovis; 6 seasons from Sept.17, 1965 - April 4, 1971; CBS; 168 half-hour episodes; co-produced with Bob Crane Enterprises during final 1970 - 71 season
9) *Johnson's Ghost*; half-hour pilot; 1965
10) *Thompson's Ghost*; half-hour sitcom pilot w/Bert Lahr, Phyllis Coates; broadcast as part of *Summer Fun*, a pilot anthology; ABC; Aug. 5, 1966; ABC
11) *Preview Tonight*; Dramatic anthology summer replacement series showcasing pilot programs; Aug. 14 - Sept. 11, 1966; ABC; 5 one-hour episodes; co-produced with Four Star, MGM Television
12) *And Baby Makes Three*; half-hour sitcom pilot w/James Stacy, Joan Blondell, Gavin McLeod; broadcast Aug. 19, 1966 as part of *Summer Fun*; ABC; Dir.: Richard Crenna, whose Pendick Productions co-produced; at one point show had alternate title, Baby Crazy (An article, "Baby Makes Three-Way Bing-Crenna-ABC-TV Tie," appeared in Variety, October 7 1964.
13) *Beat the Odds*; Game show; Dec. 16, 1968 - Sept., 1969; Johnny Gilbert, host; Bill Baldwin, announcer; Syndicated: format derived from 1961game show with same name
14) *Bright Promise*; Daytime soap opera w/Susan Brown, Paul Lukather, Dana Andrews, Colleen Gray, Anne Seymour; 3 seasons from Sept. 29, 1969 - March 31, 1972; NBC; 419 half-hour episodes; BCP was the packager under the name Frandor Productions with assistance from Cox Broadcasting.
15) *The Queen and I*; Sitcom w/ Larry Storch, Carl Ballantine, Billy DeWolfe, Pat Morita; 1 season Jan. 16 - April 24, 1969; CBS; 13 half-hour episodes.

Bing Crosby Productions: Theatrical and TV Films

1) *Those Were the Days* 1953; Dir.: Barney Girard w/Charles Winninger (BCP planned this entry for 13 half-hour TV episodes, eventually only filming the pilot.)
2) *The Magic Pear Tree* 1968; Dir.: Charles Swenson; 10-minute animated short with voices of Paul Frees, Agnes Moorehead, Keenan Wynn; co-produced with Murakami-Wolf Productions
3) *Explosion* 1969; Dir.: Jules Bricken w/Don Stroud, Richard Conte; co-produced with Meridian Films
4) *Night Slaves* 1970 TV movie; Dir.: Ted Post; w/James Franciscus, Lee Grant
5) *Willard* 1971; Dir.: Daniel Mann w/Bruce Davison, Ernest Borgnine
6) *You'll Like My Mother* 1972; Dir.: Lamont Johnson w/ Patty Duke; co-produced with Universal
7) *Ben* 1972; Dir.: Phil Karlson w/Lee Montgomery, Arthur O'Connell
8) *The Woman Hunter* 1972 TV movie; Dir.: Bernard L. Kowalski w/Barbara Eden; co-produced with Jerome Epstein Productions
9) *The Voyage of the Yes* 1973 TV movie; Dir.: Lee H. Katzin w/Desi Arnaz, Jr.; co-produced with Andrew J. Fenaday Productions
10) *Arnold* 1973; Dir.: George Fenady w/Stella Stevens, Roddy McDowell
11) *The Stranger* 1973 TV movie; Dir.: Lee Katzin w/Glenn Corbett, Cameron Mitchell: co-produced with Fenaday Associates
12) *Terror in the Wax Museum* 1973; Dir.: George Fenady w/Ray Milland; co-produced by Andrew J. Fenaday Productions
13) *Walking Tall* 1973; Dir.: Phil Karlson w/Joe Don Baker, Elizabeth Hartman
14) *The Hanged Man* 1974 TV movie; Dir.: Michael Caffey w/Steve Forrest; co-produced by Andrew J. Fenaday Productions
15) *W* 1974 Dir.: Richard Quine w/Twiggy, Michael Witney, Eugene Roche
16) *The Reincarnation of Peter Proud* 1975 Dir.: J.Lee Thompson w/Michael Sarazin; co-produced with Cinerama Productions, Fuqua Industries
17) *Walking Tall Part 2* 1975; Dir.: Earl Bellamy w/Bo Swenson, Luke Askew; co-produced with Cinerama Productions, Fuqua Industries, Wometco Enterprises
18) *Special Delivery* 1976; Dir.: Paul Wendkos w/Bo Swenson, Cybil Shepherd
19) *Final Chapter: Walking Tall*; 1977 Dir.: Jack Starrett w/Bo Swenson, Leif Garrett
20) *Mean Dog Blues* 1978; Dir.: Mel Stuart w/Gregg Henry, Scatman Crothers
21) *A Real American Hero* 1978; TV movie Dir.: Lou Antonio w/Brian Dennehy
22) *The Great Santini* 1979; Dir.: Lewis John Carlino w/ Robert Duvall, Blythe Danner
23) *Walking Tall* 2004, Dir.: Kevin Bray (MGM with acknowledgement to BCP)

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*Cinerama Releasing Corporation released *Willard, Ben, Walking Tall, Terror in the Wax Museum, Arnold, W* and *The Reincarnation of Peter Proud.*

Deserving special mention is *Bing Crosby's New York Experience,* a multiple-screen, multi-sensory presentation, which opened in1973. This was a Trans-Lux/Bing Crosby Presentation produced by Electrovision Productions, Inc. The Experience made use of batteries of movie and still projectors, quadraphonic sound, and a multitude of special effects and lighting, controlled through a digital computer. There were also a San Francisco and Hawaii Experience.

Not satisfied with being a media visionary, Bing also became a major magnate in TV and theatrical film production, creating a varied body of work that continues to entertain. Add movie and TV mogul to Bing's prolific resume. How prolific can you get?

Martin McQuade *martinmcquade2002@yahoo.com*

Discovery of a Time Capsule

John Bassett turns back the years.

I am, first and foremost, a collector of records, in particular Bing's commercial output, but I implore you to note that my choice of the word "records" excludes those items once described by broadcaster and writer Hubert Gregg as being nothing more than glorified shaving mirrors. Quite obviously, he was referring to compact discs.

In consequence I must stress that it disappoints me to observe a distinct lack of advertisements relating to the buying and selling of shellac and vinyl within the pages of this journal. If you take a moment to peruse back issues of "BING" under my editorship, look for the feature entitled "Crosby Shoppe" (now strangely re-named "Trading Post") and you will undoubtedly appreciate the reason for my gripe.

The '60s and '70s were halcyon years when a fair-sized proportion of the membership were not only avid followers of Bing's career but also keen collectors of the many different issues of his vast recorded output. Sadly, the names of those members have long been consigned to the history books and I sometimes wonder if I am the last man standing.

In a footnote to one of my articles, Malcolm Macfarlane made the somewhat startling revelation that he had sold all his vinyl many years ago and there is evidence to suggest that others have followed suit.

It would be foolish to deny that CDs have provided us with a wealth of previously unissued material and my shelves, out of necessity, do contain a few hundred of these so-called shaving mirrors, but they hold very little appeal to me and nothing on this planet could persuade me to part with even one LP or 78, let alone an entire collection.

Is mine a lone voice or can I anticipate a word of support in praise of the beloved gramophone record? I eagerly await a favourable response but I'm certainly not holding my breath!

Having shared the pine of the day, I now turn to a matter of greater interest and certainly void of any controversy.

A short while ago I discovered a very rare recording guaranteed to evoke a myriad of memories for all long-serving club members who are now in their eighties.

The collection at "Bingville" houses a 10-inch acetate-based LP, the manufacturer of which (MSS - Master Sound System) was the subject of discussion on pages 38 and 39 of BING-181.

The light-blue coloured label of this carefully preserved record bears the following inscription printed in a very neat hand: BING CROSBY SOCIETY MEETING 1957. This heading alone will certainly capture the attention of every original member still living today, and also intrigue those who have a particularly keen interest in the history of the British section of the club since its formation in 1950.

I was nine years old when this recording was made and upon playing it for the first time. I realised that I was experiencing something quite unique - a 'live' event brimming with nostalgia and preserved on magnetic tape over 62 years ago.

The 25-minute recording opened with the strains of "Where the Blue of the Night" and from that moment on I found myself drawn into a different time zone, far removed from my present-day surroundings.

According to information gleaned from the ensuing dialogue, the original taping was undertaken in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Taylor, and compered by Stan White.

As the event unfolded, Stan began to interview various members who were in attendance at this seemingly crowded venue. The somewhat repetitive theme of Stan's interviewing was that of asking which period of Bing's singing they favoured the most - his 'early' period or his 'later' period. Bearing in mind that this was 1957, it struck me as strangely amusing to think that anything from that time could be referred to as his 'later' period. As I listened to their responses, I knew that Bing would have another 20 years of recording activity ahead of him, but the group gathered there in 1957 had no knowledge of that. Instead they could speak only of matters relating to that moment in time.

There were some instances when the discussion focussed on the number of 78s owned by individual members, and in one or two cases no more than 300 discs were cited – "a fairly large collection" to quote one of the respondents involved. There was barely a mention of vinyl except for brief references to the albums "Salute to Bix" and "Songs I Wish I Had Sung".

Bing's latest record, "Around the World", had been released in June of that year on Brunswick 05674 and this was played towards the end of the evening with everybody joining in!

Immediately prior to this, the company was entertained by an extremely talented singer whose vocal resemblance to Bing was uncanny. He performed 'a capella', giving a note-perfect rendition of the song "I've Got My Captain Working for Me Now". His second song, "Far Away Places" found him accompanied by the entire ensemble. I believe that our Crosby impressionist's name was Cab Smith but this might be subject to correction.

Taking into consideration the irregular sound quality on parts of the recording, it is not possible to accurately transcribe the names of everyone mentioned on the disc, but at the very least, I can identify Dorothy Hardiman (co-president), Ted Laker (publicity officer), Eric Griffiths, Percy Keepin, Jean Gosling, Jean Rainey and another female simply referred to as Sheila, whose obvious discomfort at being interviewed I found explicably appealing!

In my opinion the most noteworthy person in attendance was an exuberant Frank Murphy who could be heard addressing the group at the opening and closing of the proceedings. Sadly, Frank is no longer with us add no doubt we have lost more members along the way, but I would dearly love to know if anybody reading this article today was actually present on that momentous occasion.

The historical value of this recording is incalculable and I cannot fully describe how I felt upon initially hearing it. The disc transported me to an era when life seemed unhurried, less complicated and almost totally void of the technology that engulfs our present day existence.

In 1957 Bing was 54, the film *High Society* was one year old, and that light-reflecting circular object found in many homes was a shaving mirror!

John Bassett

Editor: Yes, things have certainly changed since John was the Editor of the magazine from 1971 to 1975. In those days the magazine would contain many requests for 78s with lists of numbers etc. John's excellent publication "Bingville News" which he published for six years in the 1980s continued the practice of concentrating on discographical matters and he re-launched Crosby Shoppe in it.

I am more than happy to include advertisements for shellac and vinyl but nowadays there seems to be little interest in 78s or 45s. For example, Neil Robinson of Burton-on-Trent in the UK advertised his huge 78 collection in BING 182 and said that he didn't want any payment for it but the 78s would have to be collected. He did not receive any replies. When we have to deal with the collections of deceased members, the 78s usually have to be thrown away at the local refuse tip unless it is a particularly large collection which could be passed to a suitable auction house for sale. Rarer LPs are sometimes wanted by members but those left are passed to dealers at rock bottom prices. It's only too easy for many of Bing's commercial tracks to be streamed or heard on YouTube so generally the attraction for actually owning shellac or vinyl seems to have diminished. I know that Richard Baker did point out in our last issue that vinyl is having somewhat of a resurgence but it appears that many of the people buying it don't actually listen to it.

Collectors like Jack Souther and Howard Levine in the USA, Ralph Harding, Frank Grant, Bob Roberts and Colin Pugh in the UK all amassed huge collections. I visited both Jack Souther and Howard Levine in the States but neither of them played their records very often. Jack did not even have a working record player at the time. Howard though summed up the essence of the collector's passion saying "the chase is everything."

Colin Pugh for instance would buy the same LP again if the cover was slightly different to the one he already had. Now that truly is a dedicated collector and whilst I have never been like that I have acquired a lot of Crosby material over the years, be it records, cassettes, videos, DVDs, Blu-rays, books or magazines. However my 78s went to another home in the 1980s, the LPs and cassettes left me 10 years or so ago and the videos about the same time. I just wasn't playing them as I found CDs and DVDs more convenient and usually better quality. I still have over 500 CDs, 200+ DVDs and a number of Blu-rays – all of Bing. However all of my entire "record" collection is also on i-tunes and is easily and quickly available in the house from a variety of sources. I can play it in the car on my iPod too so I am constantly listening to Crosby.

Apart from John Bassett, there are still many other keen collectors of shellac and vinyl about — Ken Crossland, Michael Crampton and John Newton come quickly to mind. Ken described how he catalogued all his vinyl onto his computer in our last issue and Michael is still keenly attempting to complete his British Crosby 78 collection.

I always remember being at one of John Bassett's "Crosby Clambakes" at his home in March 1985 and he issued a challenge to those present that we could name any commercial Crosby recording and he would be able to play it from his record collection for us in less than a minute. He invariably delivered. Now with i-tunes I could do the same, and even quicker, with alternate takes included too. Including Bing and a plethora of other artists, there are over 52,000 songs in my i-tunes folder plus many complete Crosby radio shows in another part of my computer. So perhaps I am a collector after all — a digital collector!

The 1957 Bing Crosby Society meeting that John describes is very interesting. Barry Whittingham put the recording of it (and of an earlier 1956 meeting) on a "shaving mirror" in 1997 and it was played at the Leeds meeting that year. Reference to The Crosby Post of October, 1957 confirms that the meeting took place on September 8, 1957. "Sheila" was Sheila Willett and the singer was indeed Cab Smith. At one of John Marshall's gatherings at the Rembrandt Hotel in London in April, 1985, Cab again sang "I've Got My Captain Working for Me Now" but it was not a song that the band knew and it was all a bit chaotic so it would have been better if he had sung it a capella again.

Stan White, who has done so much for the Crosby cause over the years, is still about and I shared John's article with him, leading to Stan to comment:

That is an interesting article from John Bassett. I have the original LPs from which Barry Whittingham made the CDs. Yes, the "time capsule" was recorded at the home of

Bill Taylor, 27 Torrington Square, Holborn, WC1. Bill was the discologist for the British Crosby Society. This 1957 Society meeting was the second one. The first being in 1956 at which there was much excitement because apart from the first ever taped message from Bing, Bill Taylor had obtained a 7 and a half ips reel to reel tape of the soundtrack of the film "High Society".

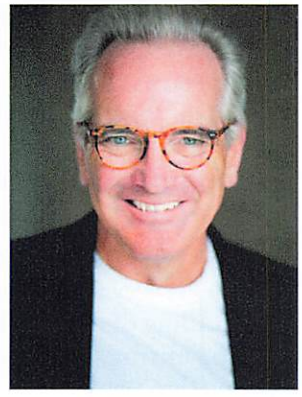
For the 1956 meeting, the late Walt Liner did the taped interviews and did quite a good job of it. He worked in magistrates' courts interviewing people for hearings so was used to doing this. (Sadly he was killed in a car crash about 1962).

Walt could not attend the 1957 get-together, so I had to step in to do the interviews. It was Frank Murphy who decided to have these recordings made for members who could not attend. To complete the picture for Ken Crossland's feature in BING#181, it was Derek Marsh of "Deroy" who made the acetate of the 1956 and 1957 meetings recorded on Bill Taylor's tape recorder. I see that John Bassett was 9 in 1957, I was 25, so I am now pushing it a bit! It is good to know that our efforts for Bing and the members back in the earlier years of the British Crosby Society are still of interest, and I thank John for remembering those days. I more or less organized the 1956 meeting and obtained the taped message from Bing. Michael Crampton has a mint copy from the tape posted to me by Murdo MacKenzie.

Stan White

A Southern Memoir

On January 19, 1970, Bing wrote to British fan Leslie Gaylor.



"I haven't any albums planned in the immediate future, Leslie, although I was considering doing some real old-timers, going back to the 20's – songs about the southern part of the country. There were a lot of good ones written in those days. If I could get an arranger interested in doing something clever with them, we might go ahead with that project."

Five years later, the project came to fruition as Jeremy Rose tells us.

Whilst researching my article on Bing and Connee Boswell for the Summer 2020 issue of BING magazine, my eye was caught by the following sentence in the first volume of the Gary Giddins biography:

"On the occasion of Bing's fiftieth anniversary in show business, an event extolled with a 1975 television special but not by the recording industry he had helped save from extinction, he led a small jazz ensemble into a studio, at his expense, to record the rarely heard LP *A Southern Memoir*"

The fact that this momentous anniversary was largely ignored by the recording industry would surely provide sufficient material for an article in itself, but I decided that it might be time for a reappraisal of this "...rarely heard LP..."

A Southern Memoir (ASM) was recorded in Los Angeles in January 1975 and marked the beginning of that almost miraculous Indian Summer of Bing's recording career which saw him criss-crossing the Atlantic to produce a steady flow of studio albums - many recorded in London - culminating in *Seasons* in 1977. In his excellent booklet notes for the 2010 Bing Crosby Enterprises/Collectors Choice Music CD release of *ASM*, Arne Fogel states that this was a project particularly dear to Bing's heart and I think all the evidence clearly supports this view. The very title suggests a personal recollection, all but two of the twelve titles on the album had been previously recorded by Bing, either commercially or for his various radio shows and Bing personally financed the whole enterprise. Furthermore, the sleeve notes for the original UK LP release - reproduced in the booklet for the 2010 CD re-issue - feature a brief interview with Bing by producer Geoff Milne in which Bing says,

"...I wanted to sing these great songs, that were such hits in their day, with modern accompaniment. Accompaniments have changed to such a degree in the last few years, that it seemed to me these songs with up-to-date backing would be somewhat enhanced."

The twelve songs, presumably hand-picked by Bing, were - *On The Alamo, Alabamy Bound, Where The Morning Glories Grow, Stars Fell On Alabama, Carolina in the Morning, Swanee, Way Down Yonder in New Orleans, Georgia On My Mind, Cryin' for the Carolines, She Is the Sunshine of Virginia, Sleepy-Time Down South* and *Sailing Down the Chesapeake Bay.* As far as I can ascertain, the only two which were completely new to Bing's repertoire at the time of recording were, *Cryin' for the Carolines* and *Where the Morning Glories Grow.*

Arrangements for the album were entrusted to jazz pianist and arranger Paul Smith (1922-2013). Smith's long career began in the early 1940s, and after working with the likes of Les Paul and Tommy Dorsey, a move to Los Angeles in the late '40s led him to concentrate on studio work. From 1956 to 1978 he worked extensively with Ella Fitzgerald as both pianist and conductor. He was the pianist in the Buddy Bregman Orchestra for Bing's 1956 album, *Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings* and also led the orchestra for Bing's next US-recorded album after *ASM - Bingo Viejo* - later in 1975. At the time of his death at the age of 91 in 2013, Smith's obituary in the Los Angeles Times stated that he played, "...with a versatility comparable to that of Oscar Peterson... he was a brilliant soloist and an accompanist who was highly praised by the many singers with whom he performed."

Although Bing himself financed the album, the "nuts-and-bolts" of the project - booking studio time, hiring musicians, etc. - was undertaken by Frank Capp Enterprises. Capp was also the drummer in

Working with Paul Smith on the Bingo Viejo album

the band. The sessions took place at TTG Studios in Los Angeles on 16th and 21st January 1975 with Paul Smith as pianist and conductor, Frank Capp on drums, Tony Rizzi (Jan. 16th) and Allen Reuss (Jan. 21st) on guitar, Joe Valenti on trumpet, Monty Budwig on bass, Dick Nash on trombone, Larry Bunker (Jan. 16th) and Vic Feldman (Jan. 21st) on percussion and Dominic Mumolo, Don Raffell and Johnny Rotella on saxophones. (Quite what Messrs Rizzi and Bunker had booked for 21st January which they considered preferable to spending a day in the studio with Bing Crosby is frankly beyond me..!)

Less than a month after completing the *ASM* sessions, Bing was in London for a series of studio sessions under his agreement with producer Ken Barnes to record a series of albums for the United Artists label. Bing offered the *ASM* tapes to United Artists, who said that any release would have to wait until after the release of Bing's first two albums on their label. Unwilling to accept the delay, Bing arranged to lease the tapes to UK Decca where, under the aegis of producer Geoff Milne, the tapes were re-mixed by engineer Iain Churches and released on Decca's London label. Meanwhile back in the US, Bing's business manager, Basil Grillo, was charged with the task of securing a deal for a domestic release. This he failed to do, and so until the 2010 BCE CD release, the London Decca LP was the only "official" release of *A Southern Memoir*.

As is my custom in articles dealing with specific albums, I will give a brief, subjective, track-by-track overview of ASM, using Fred Reynolds's method in *The Crosby Collection 1926-1977* of following the date-of-recording order rather than album track-listing order. (Track-listing order, for both the original LP release and BCE CD release is as per my song listing above). Information in italics following ten of the twelve titles refers - as far as I can ascertain - to the first time Bing featured that particular song either on radio or in the commercial recording studio. Given the very personal nature of the project, I thought it would be interesting to see just how long Bing had held these songs in affectionate esteem.

16th January 1975

Alabamy Bound (DeSylva - Green - Henderson)

Old Gold Presents Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra. August 13, 1929

After Frank Capp's pseudo-Native American drum intro, Bing sings the verse and first chorus to a fairly standard but effective arrangement that wouldn't have sounded out of place twenty years previously. For the second chorus, however, the style suddenly changes to what Arne Fogel calls, "...a seventies funk groove..." With his innate sense of rhythm, Bing takes it all in his stride, delivering a completely controlled and secure performance right through to his high-note fade-out at the end of the coda. Although I don't think this version improves on Bing's various radio performances of this number - particularly the Buddy Cole track recorded on June 18th 1956 - it's a very assured and enjoyable performance. (The "seventies funk groove" style would be used again much more extensively, and with greater consequences on **Georgia on My Mind** - see below..!)

Where the Morning Glories Grow (Kahn - Egan - Whiting)

As far as I can tell, this is the first time Bing sang this catchy, "ear-worm" of a song from 1917. The arrangement is an affectionate pastiche of Guy Lombardo-style lounge music of the 1920s. Bing sings the opening chorus, with the downward octave swoop on, "Where the sun comes a'peepin'..." suiting him to a T. In the instrumental middle chorus the three saxophones come into their own and whilst I'm not sure that Paul Smith's piano jazz rubato is entirely authentic, Tony Rizzi lays aside his guitar and contributes some beautifully restrained banjo playing. A very pleasing upward key-change leads to a final vocal chorus and a *rallentando* coda. I find the whole thing utterly delightful. Bing must have thought so too because, as Arne Fogel points out in his liner notes to the CD release, Bing chose this number to feature on his only appearance on Johnny Carson's *The Tonight Show* in the US on March 5th 1976, rather than plugging his then current United Artists albums. He also featured the song in his London Palladium shows in 1976 and '77.

Stars Fell on Alabama (Parish - Perkins)

Bing Crosby Entertains for Woodbury Soap. November 20, 1934

At first hearing, you could be forgiven for thinking that this was a Buddy Cole arrangement from the mid-fifties - and it's certainly none the worse for that! It's a beautifully laid-back and assured performance of a favourite song of mine. The arrangement is tasteful, supportive and completely in keeping with the style of the material. After a brief guitar and rhythm section opening Bing sings a verse and chorus. He then picks up again at the middle-eight before an upward key-change into the last eight bars of the chorus and a coda, bringing to a close three minutes of pure Crosby magic.

Carolina in the Morning (Kahn - Donaldson)

Kraft Music Hall (KMH). January 15, 1948. (Although Bing had done a couple of skits on "Carolina..." on his own KMH show in the early 40s - including one with vaudevillian William Frawley, who introduced the song in 1922 - this is a duet from a Jolson-hosted KMH show).

Another change of style here, with Paul Smith providing a gently swinging, distinctly Basie-esque arrangement. Fred Reynolds is somewhat unimpressed by Bing's contribution, and while it's true that the arrangement tends to work against the lilting quality of the melody we might be more used to hearing, Bing does what he does best - sits on the beat and gets on with it! I think it could be argued that this track is more about the arrangement than the vocal, with some nice Basie "tinkling" from Smith and a superb (uncredited) saxophone solo.

Way Down Yonder in New Orleans (Creamer - Layton)

KMH. March 12, 1936

Within a tempo which doesn't alter from start to finish, Paul Smith introduces several musical styles and rhythms to accompany this number, which I suppose is best known to Crosby fans from its inclusion on the 1960 album *Bing 'n' Satchmo*. After a Dixieland introduction and first chorus from Bing, the rhythm takes a Latin-American turn to introduce the verse, during which Bing name-checks various New Orleans personalities and delicacies, including clarinetist and club-owner Pete Fountain. A final chorus backed by a rather "funkier" sound leads to a closing coda. This is a perfectly pleasant if not particularly outstanding track, but it does once again illustrate Bing's innate sense of where the stressed beats lie in a musical line, and in my opinion it's this awareness which gives him his amazing rhythmic freedom and dexterity.

Sleepy Time down South (Muse - René - René)

15 Minutes with Bing Crosby. October 1, 1931

Listed in some sources as *When It's Sleepy Time down South*, this 1931 song by Clarence Muse and Leon and Otis René became the theme song of Bing's friend and colleague Louis Armstrong. Having first sung it on his sustaining radio show in the year of its composition, Bing reprised it more than forty years later for *A Southern Memoir*. A tasteful, unobtrusive but extremely accomplished arrangement allows Bing to deliver a sincere and affecting performance.

21st January 1975

On the Alamo (Kahn - Jones)

CBS. May 15, 1956. Subsequently released on "New Tricks"

This track, which opens *A Southern Memoir*, starts with a piano "lick" from Paul Smith, after which Bing sings the verse - which was omitted from his '56 Buddy Cole recording on the *New Tricks* album - "freestyle" to piano accompaniment. The rhythm picks up when the band joins for the first chorus, with some gentle brass underscoring. The band then take a sixteen-bar section where the trumpet of Joe Valenti is more to the fore, before Bing rejoins for the final sixteen bars. A coda brings things to an understated close. It's a pleasing arrangement, with attractive close-harmony chords for the brass and reeds, giving a very intimate feel to the whole track.

Swanee (Caesar - Gershwin)

KMH hosted by Al Jolson. October 16, 1947

Paul Smith provides a suitably rhythmic arrangement of this number which will forever be associated with Al Jolson. Very effective, punchy interjections from brass and reeds accompany Bing's verse and chorus before a key-change leads to an instrumental break including an amazing piano solo which manages to quote from "Love in Bloom" and Dvorak's "Humoresque"! Bing rejoins for the bridge section, and after Smith takes a few liberties with the harmonies in the final eight bars of the chorus, the number ends with a play-out of descending "funky" chords. Even at the pacy tempo of the arrangement, Bing is perfectly in control of the material, laying back on the beat and even managing a few vocal interjections. (The sleeve notes for the UK LP release state that this track was recorded on January 16th, but examination of the master tapes reveal that it was in fact recorded on the 21st.)

Georgia on My Mind (Gorell - Carmichael)

KMH. January 9, 1941

What to make of this version of the Hoagy Carmichael classic? I mentioned the word "funky" in the last paragraph, but this arrangement takes it to a new level - certainly in the context of a Bing Crosby album. At the risk of playing devil's advocate, however, I have to say that I "get" the possible reasons behind the decision to give the song such a treatment. We are, after all, in 1975

- the era of the *Shaft* movies and *Starsky and Hutch* on TV. It may be that Paul Smith thought it would give the album a wider appeal or maybe he thought that the track could be released as a single. Whatever the reasons, I'm afraid I think it fails on almost every level. True, Bing is able to hold his own against the wailing trumpet and throbbing percussion accompaniment in the chorus sections, but the main problem occurs in a passage which did not actually appear on the original UK release. There is a "stop-chorus" style arrangement of the middle-eight section on the original track which, as Arne Fogel quite rightly says, "...presents Bing with a complex rhythmic challenge..." At this point I have to part company with Arne, because I'm afraid I think Bing fluffs this section. Everything is fine to begin with, but when we get to, "...still in peaceful dreams I see..." Bing just sounds rushed and flummoxed. It would be interesting to know how many takes were necessary! (I have listened to this section more than a dozen times, beating time with the music, and I still can't work out exactly what's supposed to be happening.) The President of British Decca, Sir Edward Lewis, also expressed concerns and it was agreed that the offending section should be edited out for the UK release. Apparently, Bing expressed a wish to have a new arrangement made, but unfortunately nothing came of this. Moving swiftly on...

Cryin' for the Carolines (Lewis - Young - Warren)

This is one of my favourite tracks on the album, although it has to be said that the very attractive arrangement makes no attempt to express the plaintive, yearning sentiments contained in the lyrics. After a *bossa-nova*-style introduction, Bing enters for a typically relaxed and assured first chorus. The rhythm then changes to a sort of big-band "solid beat" feel for a central section of two verses from Bing before returning to the *bossa-nova* for a final middle-eight and half-chorus. As he does several times on the album, Paul Smith provides a very effective coda to end the number. I find Smith's use of codas (additional musical passages to round things off at the end of a song) extremely impressive. It may seem a minor point, but they are skilfully and tastefully done, making a real "occasion" of numbers which might otherwise be just "chorus-verse-chorus".

She is the Sunshine of Virginia (MacDonald - Carroll)

KMH. June 13, 1940

The 1954 version

A very appealing arrangement of this 1916 song by Ballard MacDonald and Harry Carroll, previously recorded by Bing with Les Brown and his Band of Renown in June, 1954. Again, I'm not sure what the wood-block and bongo-led Latin-American rhythm has to do with a song about a gal from the State of Virginia, but it's all very expertly done and Bing - in the same key as in 1954! - is completely at ease. After an instrumental middle section, the arrangement morphs into more of a big-band feel and the whole thing ends with an extended coda and one of those classic little Crosby vocal riffs which always have me grinning from ear to ear.

Sailing down the Chesapeake Bay (Havez - Botsford)

KMH. May 26, 1938

This track closes the album and rather than muster all available forces for a "big finish", the arrangement uses only piano, bass, banjo and percussion. Bing sings an opening verse and three choruses. The style is very much vaudeville/silent movie pianist and it all zips along at a slightly faster lick than his 1952 recording, but Bing lays back on the beat and is clearly having a ball. A mid-point key-change carries the whole shebang through to a slam-dunk finish.

It has been an extremely rewarding experience listening in detail to this album from the beginning of the Indian Summer of Bing's career. There are some real gems among the 12 titles, but although the album certainly demonstrates the skill and versatility of arranger Paul Smith, I think that on the whole it lacks the cohesive "stamp" of a Billy May or Pete Moore. (This may, of course, have been a conscious decision...) The Lombardo and Basie pastiches are affectionately done and in other places I hear echoes of Bing's collaborations with Bob Scobey and Buddy Bregman. A couple of the small ensemble tracks are, to my ears, interchangeable with versions made with Buddy Cole 20 years previously, but overall *A Southern Memoir* presents Bing doing what he does supremely well - sitting in a studio with a group of trusted colleagues laying down a few tunes.

I remember having the LP on my shelves in the '70s (and lifting the stylus to skip over *Georgia on My Mind* whenever I played it!) but there's no doubt that the publicity in the UK surrounding Bing's visits to London to record the Ken Barnes UA albums and their subsequent release overshadowed *A Southern Memoir*. The 2010 BCE CD release includes alternate takes of *On the Alamo, Alabamy Bound, Stars Fell on Alabama, Swanee* and *Sleepy Time down South*, together with the original LP release edit of *Georgia on My Mind*. The only significant difference among the alternate takes is that *Stars Fell on Alabama* is taken at a slightly slower tempo.

As I always say at this point, these articles would not be possible without reference to the incredible work already undertaken by dedicated Crosbyphiles and in this case the relevant volume of the Fred Reynolds *Crosby Collection*, Lionel Pairpoint's *Radio Directories* and the Jim Reilly/Wig Wiggins discography have been my constant companions.

Jeremy Rose

(Editor: That's a superb article from Jeremy and he certainly knows his music!)

Celluloid Crosby

David Lobosco offers his thoughts on one of the later Crosby films this time around.

For this latest review, I thought I would review 1956's "Anything Goes". Bing Crosby's co-star in the film, Jeanmaire, passed away this year at the age of 96, so I figured it would be fitting to watch something of which she was a part. This 1956 film would be the last film Bing would make for Paramount Studios after being with them for 24 years! It remains the second longest contract for any star with any studio, only exceeded by Robert Taylor with MGM. The musical "Anything Goes" was a superb Cole Porter Broadway show when it opened in the 1930s. Since its 1934 debut at the Neil Simon Theatre (at the time known as the Alvin) on Broadway, the musical has been revived several times in the United States and Britain and has been filmed twice. The stage musical had a tryout in Boston, before opening on Broadway at the Alvin Theatre on November 21, 1934. It ran for 420 performances, becoming the fourth longest-running musical of the 1930s, despite the impact of the Great Depression on Broadway patrons' disposable income.

The show was first filmed in 1936 with Bing and Ethel Merman, but it had little resemblance to the Broadway musical or this 1956 remake other than Bing in the film and a few Cole Porter tunes. The plot of this 1956 remake is also quite different to the Broadway show. The only thing that stayed the same was that most of the story takes place on a luxury liner.

So the movie opens up with a veteran Broadway star (played by Bing) meeting an up and coming television star (played by Donald O' Connor) at a party, and they decide it would be fun to star together in a Broadway show, with each guy thinking they are helping the other one's career out. O'Connor tells Bing that he doesn't care who their leading lady is, but in reality, he does. Crosby goes to see a blonde American who has been performing in London (Mitzi Gaynor), and he signs her to a contract. Meanwhile, Donald O'Connor in Paris takes it upon himself to sign a French ballet star (Jeanmaire). So, they now have two actresses signed for one role. For the rest of the film Bing and Donald try to figure out how to solve their problem. O'Connor falls in love with Mitzi, and Bing falls in love with the French ballet star. Then there is the typical movie twist where they each lose the girl, before they manage to get the girls back, revamp the plot of their show so they have two leading ladies, and live happily ever after.

Bing Crosby and Donald O' Connor were great together, and their relationship went back to 1938 when

Donald played Bing's younger brother in "Sing You Sinners." They had tried to reteam for 1954's "White Christmas," but O'Connor had to withdraw before filming could begin and was replaced with Danny Kaye. Mitzi Gaynor is also great with both Bing and Donald. It was little weird though seeing Mitzi Gaynor and Donald O' Connor as love interests since they played brother and sister in the earlier film "There's No Business Like Show Business"! Phil Harris was also in the cast as Mitzi Gaynor's gambling father. He was the reason why the two were on the run in Europe to begin with. Phil was good in his role, but it was kind of small. Being one of Bing's few close friends in the real world, and since he had such a great relationship with Bing, I wish they would have performed a number together. The problem I have with the film is Jeanmaire as Bing's love interest. I just did not feel any chemistry between the two. Zizi was a gifted ballet dancer, and she was mesmerizing in the 1952 film "Hans Christian Andersen," but other than her musical numbers, she did not add much to "Anything Goes." She was hugely popular in her home country of France and was married to the choreographer Roland Petit. However, she was totally wrong as Bing's love interest. She was a fine dancer, but the Cole Porter song "I Get a Kick out Of You," although well-choreographed by her husband, was somewhat wasted because of her limited vocal ability. Bing, in his Paramount contract, had co-star approval so maybe he wanted to try to reach out to a different audience, but I think the pairing of Bing and Jeanmaire hurt the movie.

A lot of movie studios when they are making a cinema rendering of a Broadway show try to keep the musical score intact. However, Paramount Studios had a habit of chopping up a Broadway score and adding different songs to their movie adaptations. They did this to Cole Porter in 1936 for that version of "Anything Goes." Paramount kept a lot of Porter's songs in the 1956 version, but they also cut a few and then added songs that were written by Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen. Cahn and Van Heusen were good songwriters, but they were not in the Cole Porter class. While we got to hear and to watch the cast perform great Cole Porter standards like "Anything Goes" (sung by Mitzi Gaynor), "You're The Top" (sung by Bing, Mitzi, Donald O'Connor, and Jeanmaire), and "All Through the Night

The stars at rehearsal

(sung by Bing), we also witnessed the hokey songs written by Cahn and Van Heusen for the film like: "You Can Bounce Right Back", "Ya Gotta Give the People Hoke", and "A Second Hand Turban and a Crystal Ball". At times it felt like there were two musical scores in the film. I am okay if Paramount wanted to punch up the score with different songs, but the Cole Porter songbook was vast, and they could have used dozens of other Porter songs.

The two best musical numbers in the film were, firstly, the song "It's De-Lovely" which was performed by Donald O'Connor and Mitzi Gaynor. Their singing is charming and the dance number was definitely the best number in the film and possibly one of the outstanding routines that Paramount filmed in the 1950s. The other number that I liked was the closing number "Blow, Gabriel, Blow" which was performed by Bing and the whole cast. Some people online had an issue with a man singing the song since Ethel Merman introduced it and sang it on Broadway, but it was a great huge Hollywood finale, and Bing did it justice. The song was a big send off to Bing who had helped to get Paramount out of near bankruptcy in the 1930s when he signed with the studio.

The critics' reviews were mixed though when the film premiered in New York on March 21, 1956…

The Variety reviewer said: "It's a bright offering for Easter release, geared to play an engaging tune at the wickets. Male topliners Bing Crosby and Donald O'Connor go together as though born to give the zip to what scripter Sidney Sheldon has concocted hereunder the stage title. While there are Cole Porter songs and the legit handle is still carried, that's about all that remains of what went on behind the footlights, and there's scant resemblance to Paramount's 1936 film version, in which Crosby also starred with Ethel Merman."

A. H. Weiler, writing for The New York Times, thought that, "For all its activity, "Anything Goes" is, in the main, standard musical comedy. Some of the principals are decidedly decorative and talented. The script, however, is transparent and fragile."

Bing croons "All through the Night" to Jeanmaire

There's a small goof in the film if you watch closely enough. During the "Ya Gotta Give the People Hoke" number Crosby and O'Connor go into a prop room, pick up a prop, go on stage, do a "bit" and go back to the prop room. About midway through, Bing comes out on stage wearing a fireman's hat. There is a pile of brownish debris and several piles of white material that were not there a second before, indicating that one or more "bits" had been cut after filming.

So even with my minor complaints about it, I think "Anything Goes" is a pretty good movie. It was successful for Paramount, and it marked the end of Bing's association with that studio. Overall it is a good musical by Paramount's standards but maybe not by MGM's benchmarks. Just look at Bing's first post Paramount musical – "High Society" for MGM later that year. That is how a musical should be made! You may not be blown away by 1956's "Anything Goes," but I am sure that you will enjoy it.

David Lobosco *davidlobosco@yahoo.com*

Bing Presents Oreste

This rare Paramount short has surfaced on YouTube. Filmed in June 1955, when Bing was at Paramount making the afore mentioned "Anything Goes", it's a ten minute promotion of Maltese singer Oreste Kirkop who was soon to star in the film of "The Vagabond King". Bing, wearing the costume he wore for the "Blow, Gabriel, Blow" scene, introduces Oreste singing "Vesti La Giubba", "Cara Mia" and "Begin the Beguine" accompanied by Victor Young and the Paramount Orchestra.

15 Minutes with Bing Crosby

Most of you will be familiar with Bing's first nationwide radio broadcast from New York in September 1931. It was supposed to have happened on August 31 but because of Bing suffering with laryngitis it didn't happen until 11 p.m. on September 2. Bill Paley of CBS had signed the crooner on an incredible $1500 per week for six daily shows per week in the hope that a sponsor would quickly be found. The local response to that first broadcast was somewhat muted.

> *While on the subject of WABC, we again remained up to see if Bing Crosby arrived. Bing sang, but after the long wait, most of his appeal was stale. As a singer, he has more tricks than voice, but Bing has finally reached the air, so all is well at CBS.*
> (David Bratton, The Brooklyn Daily Times, September 3, 1931)

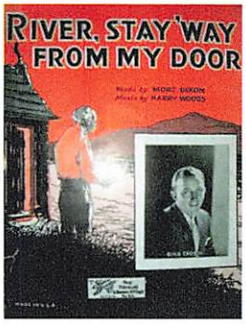
The 11 p.m. slot was ideal for listeners on the West Coast because of what was then a 4 hour time difference. However, because of the increasing popularity of the show, Bing switched to broadcasting at 7pm. on September 22 as direct competition with the enormously successful Amos 'N' Andy program on NBC. This was very acceptable for the East Coast but not for California and it was not until September 28 that station KHJ started taking the show again at 4pm. Victor Young had been leading the orchestra at the outset and on October 5th Freddie Rich took over the baton.

By then, interest from sponsors was rapidly increasing thanks to Bing's popular recordings and the impact of his recently released first short film for Mack Sennett. The American Tobacco Company stepped up to sponsor the show and they decided to promote their Cremo Cigars product instead of their Lucky Strikes brand.

So the unsponsored "15 Minutes with Bing Crosby" show finished on October 31 prior to the start of the Cremo program. There had been 52 shows and until recently little was known about the songs sung by Bing. Fortunately however, the Brooklyn Daily Times published the songs intended to be used prior to the broadcast and we have been able to construct a listing from their pages. There can be no guarantee that last-minute changes were not made. It is possible that changes were made for the West Coast broadcast too. A typical show had three songs from the crooner plus an orchestral piece and these were the songs sung by Bing.

- After You've Gone – show No. 30
- All Alone 36
- All of Me 25
- Always 43
- As Time Goes By 9, 21, 42
- At Your Command 16, 30, 44
- Auf Wiedersehn, My Dear 37
- Beautiful Love 35
- Begging For Love 7
- Blue Kentucky Moon 18
- Blues in My Heart 34, 52
- Call Me Darling (Call Me Sweetheart, Call Me Dear) 42
- Can't You See (How I Love You?) 36
- Concentratin' on You 23
- Dancing in the Dark 3, 28, 38
- Dinah 14, 39
- Don't Ask Me Why 15
- Every Little Movement Has a Meaning of Its Own 18
- Faded Summer Love, A 45
- Falling in Love Again 45
- Fool Me Some More 21
- For You 14, 25, 38
- Goodnight Sweetheart 28, 43, 52
- Guilty 8, 20, 41
- Honeysuckle Rose 34, 51
- Hour of Parting, The 8
- I Apologize 2, 24, 37
- I Can't Get Mississippi off My Mind 16
- I Cried for You 27, 49
- I Don't Know Why 7, 12, 22, 47
- I Found a Million Dollar Baby 1, 17, 36
- I Idolize My Baby's Eyes 49
- I Kiss Your Hand, Madame 18, 39
- I Surrender Dear 4, 38
- If I Could Be with You 27

- I'll See You in My Dreams 48
- I'm All Dressed up with a Broken Heart 9
- I'm Happy When You're Jealous 33
- I'm Through with Love 1, 19, 51
- I'm Sorry Dear 36
- I'm with You 10, 29
- I Need Lovin' 11, 24
- I Wouldn't Change You for the World 26, 46
- In a Dream 26
- In a Japanese Garden 44
- It Had to Be You 13, 44, 48
- It Must Be True 40
- It's Love 14, 42
- Just One More Chance 1, 11, 22, 29, 41
- Kiss That You've Forgotten, The 17, 51
- Kiss Waltz, The 49
- Kissable Baby 32, 47
- Life Is Just a Bowl of Cherries 28, 35
- Louise 40, 52
- Love Came into My Heart 48
- Love Letters in the Sand 46
- Lucky Seven 2
- Makin' Faces at the Man in the Moon 15
- Many Happy Returns of the Day 4, 41
- More You Hurt Me, The 52
- My Lips Tell the World It's Over 46
- My Song 29, 47
- Never 13, 30, 44 (I wonder if this was "Tonight or Never")
- Nobody's Sweetheart 20
- Now That You're Gone 27, 35
- Now That You're Mine 3
- Old Playmate 10, 19, 33, 35
- One More Time 45
- Out of Nowhere 2, 43
- Pardon Me, Pretty Baby 5, 38
- River, Stay 'Way from My Door 9, 25, 39
- Shine On Harvest Moon 5, 23
- Sleep, Sleep, Sleep 40
- Someday I'll Find You 7, 12
- Star Dust 11, 48
- Sugar 33
- Sweet Sue, Just You 42
- Sweet and Lovely 10, 21, 32, 49
- Sweetheart of Sigma Chi, The 39
- Take It from Me 19
- Take Your Time 50
- That's Why Darkies Were Born 31
- There's No Other Girl (After Loving You) 2
- There's Nothing Too Good for My Baby 12
- This Is the Missus 37
- Three Little Words 4
- Thrill Is Gone, The 16
- Time On My Hands 24, 45
- Tonight or Never 15
- What Is It? 5, 23, 44
- What Price Love? 50
- When It's Sleepy Time down South 26, 40, 44, 46
- When Yuba Plays the Rumba on the Tuba 3, 13
- Why Dance? 20, 44
- Without a Song 32, 37



- Without That Gal! 8, 29, 41
- Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams 17, 31, 44, 51
- You Brought a New Kind of Love to Me 31, 43
- You Can't Stop Me from Loving You 22
- You Didn't Know the Music (I Didn't Know the Words 50
- You Want Lovin' (But I Want Love) 34
- You're in Everybody's Arms 47
- You're My Everything 50

Over 100 different songs and many of them we know of course but there were quite a few that were new to me. They have all been added to Frans van der Kolff's incredible Songography on the BING magazine website.

The Cremo show began on November 2, 1931 and Bing gave two 15-minute shows for 6 days each week. One at 7:15 pm. (thereby avoiding the conflict with "Amos 'N' Andy" which aired for 15 minutes at 7pm.) and one for the West Coast at 11p.m. Later that week he started a 20-week run with the Paramount theatres in New York and Brooklyn giving four performances a day. How on earth he managed to fit it all in is a wonder and it was not surprising that his voice suffered from the hard work he gave it. He sought medical advice and, in order to avoid surgery, he decided to rest his voice as much as possible when he was not working.

The songs used for the Cremo Show were documented by the late Larry Kiner in a booklet he published in 1973 and they were reproduced in Lionel Pairpoint's book "And Here's Bing" which can also be found on the BING magazine website.

The Cremo show ended somewhat unexpectedly on February 27, 1932 and the following week Bing began broadcasting with the Freddie Rich Orchestra on an unsponsored basis three nights a week instead of the previous six in order to reduce the strain on his voice. A time slot of 6:30-6:45pm was chosen but this was not acceptable to the California stations and they did not take the show at the outset other than on Saturday afternoons at 3:30pm. Subsequently on March 14, the show was switched to 6:45-7pm. with an extra show on Thursdays at 11:45 p.m. (8:45 PST) for the West Coast to replace the Saturday broadcast.

Bing left New York on tour on April 14 and he appeared at theatres in Boston, Buffalo, Minneapolis, New Haven, Chicago, St. Louis and Detroit as he made his way across country to Los Angeles where he was to film "The Big Broadcast". The crooner continued to deliver his fifteen-minute radio show from each location on the tour but, with effect from April 18, only on Mondays and Wednesdays. Eddie Lang and Lennie Hayton accompanied him and I guess Lennie probably obtained a few local musicians to help out with the shows.

The details of the songs he sang on the 47 radio programs he made after the Cremo series are sketchy but it has proved possible to list the Crosby content of sixteen of the shows.

April 4
You're Still in My Heart
Lovable
Dream Sweetheart

April 8
I Found You
Was That the Human Thing to Do?
My Mom
April 15 (from Detroit)
My Woman
Say That You Were Teasing Me
You're Still in My Heart
April 27 (from Chicago)
One Hour with You
I Know You're Lying, But I Love It
May 11 (from station WAAB, Boston)
Where Are You, Girl of My Dreams
Hummin' to Myself
May 18 (from New Haven, Connecticut)
Home on the Range
Sweet Georgia Brown
Lazy Day
May 25 (from Chicago)
The Night Shall Be Filled with Music
My Extraordinary Gal
Meet Me Tonight in My Dreams Sweetheart
June 8 (from St. Louis)
Lawd, You Made the Night Too Long
Dinah
Where Are You, Girl of My Dreams
June 20 (from Los Angeles - the announcer was Lindsay MacHarrie)
Cabin in the Cotton
Sweet Georgia Brown
My Silent Love
June 22 (from Los Angeles)
Star Dust
Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea
Paradise
June 27
Three on a Match
Hummin' to Myself
Lullaby of the Leaves
June 29
In My Hideaway
You're Blasé
Everyone Knows It but You

July 4
Please Handle with Care
With a Dime in My Pocket
Lullaby of the Leaves
July 6
Masquerade
Am I Wasting My Time?
Paradise
July 11
The Voice in the Old Village Choir
I'll Never Be the Same
You're Blasé
Everyone Knows It but You
July 13
The Voice in the Old Village Choir
Holdin' My Honey's Hand
My Silent Love

Bing's contract with CBS expired on July 15 and on July 18, he was scheduled to broadcast but pulled out of the show an hour before it was due to go on the air, as fresh terms could not be agreed. Bing then appeared twice on the CBS 'California Melodies' programme free of charge but did not do any more radio work until 1933 when he commenced the 'Music That Satisfies' programme. And that's another story.

Malcolm Macfarlane

One Sweet Letter from You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters and emails received since the last issue.

Nancy Lenner, *by email from Naples, Florida, USA*

I am writing today as a long-time fan of Bing's as was my father before me. I just received the latest copy of BING and realized I had a recording produced by The Bing Crosby Historical Society. I was a member, as well as a member of BINGANG. I found the record and thought I would send it along.

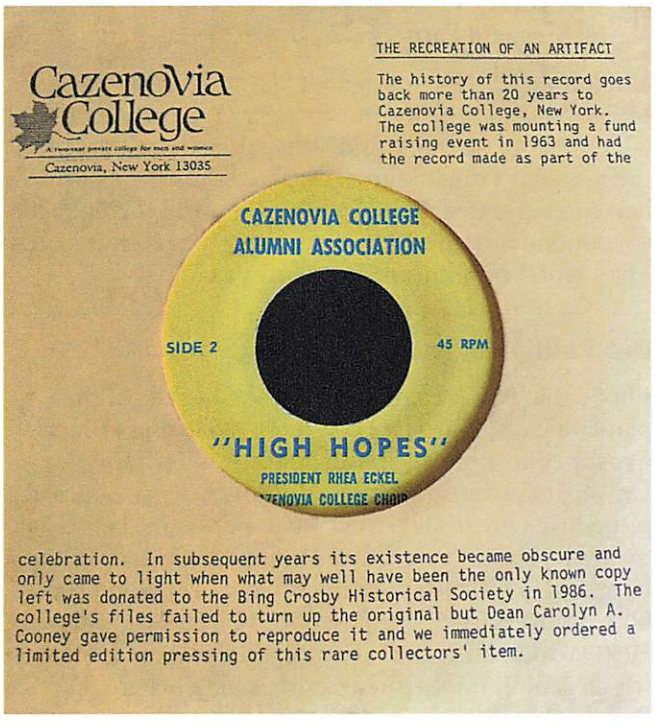
The Bing Crosby Historical Society
CAZENOVIA COLLEGE
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
SIDE 1
45 RPM
"HIGH HOPES"
JAMES VAN HEUSEN
SAMMY CAHN
BING CROSBY
On side one MC Jimmy Van Heusen introduces Bing who sings a whimsical parody of "High Hopes."
Side two features th Cazenovia choir sing the same song in a choral version.
THE BING CROSBY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 216
Tacoma Washington 9

I began to reminisce after reading through the wonderful issue of BING. In the 1980's I was also a member of the Bingthings Society. I recall going to a gathering held in NY State, a first for me! Two members remain in my memory. One, whose name I have forgotten, was the son of the author of the Christmas song "Sleigh Ride". That song was always a favorite since my high school days and remains high on my list of Christmas songs, of course sung by Bing! I was in the Color Guard then and our band would always play "Sleigh Ride" at half time at the football game on Thanksgiving Day. The other member who sticks out in my little brain was Ernest Sutkowski. A fine collector but also a man who bore a striking resemblance to George Steinbrenner, the owner of the NY Yankees! My favorite team!

Who would have thought that the little girl who sat on a stool listening to her dad's recordings of Bing, would all these years later still love and appreciate Bing and would have met his wife Kathryn and had a correspondence with her for many years. I am blessed and full of gratitude.

I hope this finds you and yours happy and healthy during this difficult time.

(Editor: What a nice letter from Nancy! The Bing Crosby Historical Society was established as a non-profit organization in 1977 in Tacoma, WA. having been founded by Ken Twiss, a longtime Crosby fan. The society published a magazine called "The Crooner" and it sponsored many events and activities, including an annual tribute to Bing in Tacoma; the designation of Bing's birthplace as a historic landmark; and the pursuit of the issuance of a commemorative Bing Crosby postage stamp. One of the primary aims of the BCHS was to acquire Bing's birthplace in Tacoma and create a permanent museum of Crosbyana to replace the existing traveling exhibits that had been displayed at functions like the 1989 Washington State Centennial celebration. Unfortunately, this goal was not met. In 1993, with Ken Twiss having some health issues, the BCHS board decided to give its collection to Gonzaga in June 1993.


Cazenovia College
Cazenovia, New York 13035
THE RECREATION OF AN ARTIFACT
The history of this record goes back more than 20 years to Cazenovia College, New York. The college was mounting a fund raising event in 1963 and had the record made as part of the
CAZENOVIA COLLEGE
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
SIDE 2
45 RPM
"HIGH HOPES"
PRESIDENT RHEA ECKEL
celebration. In subsequent years its existence became obscure and only came to light when what may well have been the only known copy left was donated to the Bing Crosby Historical Society in 1986. The college's files failed to turn up the original but Dean Carolyn A. Cooney gave permission to reproduce it and we immediately ordered a limited edition pressing of this rare collectors' item.

Bingthings Society was formed by Bob and Joyce Lundberg, also of Tacoma, and their quarterly magazine was called BINGTALKS. It ran from 1989 to November 1995 when publication ceased due to Bob's declining health. BCHS had started holding regular annual dinners and then Bob Lundberg took over. Leroy Anderson was the writer of the music for "Sleigh Ride" and I guess that it was one of his sons who was at the gathering Nancy attended.

Michael Crampton in his article earlier in this issue welcomed a new member from Russia, Tom Joe Mortel. Crosby stalwart Stan White did his bit to foster East / West relationships many years ago as he tells us in his recent letter.)

Stan White, *Rothwell, Northamptonshire, UK*

Not sure of the actual year, but about 1959/60, Mr. V. A. Repnikov, who worked at the Ceylon Embassy in Moscow, had a letter published in one of the UK musical papers asking if people could help him obtain recordings featuring popular music and jazz etc. as he found it difficult to find records in Russia. He pointed out that payment was difficult because of the bad relations between Russia and other countries. However some people helped him out with jazz, big bands, singers and so on.

I decided to help too and sent some Chris Barber jazz and some Bing. Anyway, "Slava" – he said call me that – thanked me and asked how he could contact Bing for a photo. So I gave Slava Bing's office address. I also dropped a line to Larry Crosby saying that I had done this, knowing of the cold relations between Russia and the western world. Some little time later, Slava sent me a photo of himself taken by one of his friends at lunch time in what I think he called Red Square in Moscow. He then told me about his parcel from Bing containing the photo, along with EPs and LPs and one 78, which was broken. He had asked for a photo, not records. As I had told Larry of his reason for contacting the western world, Bing and Larry obviously decided to help.

Not long after this, noting that Slava had sent Russian LPs to me and others – mostly opera type singers which was all he could find – the authorities, ours or the Russians I don't know, contacted those of us who had corresponded with Slava with records, saying "This correspondence must end" returning the recent records I had sent. I never heard from Slava again.

Bob Phillips, *by email from Fairfax, Virginia, USA*

I hope that you are doing well in the middle of the pandemic. At long last I can report that Wig's Bing Crosby collection has found a home. It is at the University of Pittsburgh Library (https://www.library.pitt.edu). Due to the virus, it will be a while before it makes its appearance, but the university is excited to have it. It is interesting to note that it arrived on the 60th anniversary of the Pittsburgh Pirates winning the 1960 World Series and is kept in the Hillman Library which is built on the site of Forbes Field where the Pirates played the winning game. I met Wig 10 years earlier in Pittsburgh at the 50th anniversary when they showed Bing's movie of the game.

Jonathan D. Reichman, *by email from Chappaqua, New York, USA*

I loved Martin McQuade's fascinating article on the films that Bing never made. I have a few observations:

1. According to Charles Shields' 2006 book "Mockingbird", Bing wanted to play Atticus Finch in Universal's 1962 adaptation of Harper Lee's novel "To Kill a Mockingbird". Other actors considered for the role were Spencer Tracy (Lee's first choice, but he had other commitments) and Rock Hudson (a contender because he was under contract to Universal). The part went to Gregory Peck, who won the Best Actor Oscar for it.

2. Martin mentions a Paramount western musical in addition to "Pardners". This could have been "Red Garters", a 1954 film that ended up starring Jack Carson and Rosemary Clooney.

3. I'm surprised that Bing apparently wasn't considered for the lead role in Francis Ford Coppola's 1968 film version of the Broadway musical "Finian's Rainbow"; the part went to Fred Astaire.

4. I also think Bing would've been great as Tevye the Dairyman in the 1971 film version of "Fiddler on the Roof", but the role went to Chaim Topol.

Frans van der Kolff, *by email from Apeldoorn, The Netherlands*

The magazine arrived last Wednesday and I've just finished reading it. Thanks again for a wonderful edition. I found so much of interest in the issue, it's almost impossible to mention everything - that would be another magazine, and I do not want to take up that much of your time. ;-)

You spoke of DeOldify and asked how readers feel about this software. Although I readily admit it's impressive software, I am not much in favour of it because it recreates a calculated guess of reality only - watch the photos of Bing with brown eyes instead of blue. In my opinion, it is telling one cannot find tests on the net of what DeOldify does with colour photos from which the colour information has been deleted (not just faded to black and white, but deleted altogether). In such cases, you would be able to make an exact comparison between the original colour photo and the DeOldify variant and see what the effect. There's a big trend going on about colourizing black and white films and photos, I know. But I am not convinced about the quality and reliability and I'd rather go for the original. Black and white has a beauty all of its own, anyway. Just my opinion of course; there may be many who think otherwise.

There is a lot of interest in Dixie Lee, both in the magazine and in Crosby Fan World these days. For me, she was a fixture as Bing's wife but marginal as an artist. Maybe the article by Anton Garcia-Fernandez will inspire me to change my view. I really should give her recordings a listen and her films a view to achieve a more motivated opinion about her.

I was pleased to read Lorne Harasen's article about John Scott Trotter, as I believe not a great many articles have been written about him. I learned quite a few new things.

I remember well the reissue of the Bing Crosby Historical Society of "I've Got the Girl" and the controversy it caused - and obviously still causes.

The "Tobaccoland on Parade" film is the find of the year (till now anyway) and justly mentioned in the

magazine. Good that it's so readily available to one and all, too.

I had just bought the Region 2 Blu-ray version of "The Bells of St. Mary's" when the better Arrow Films version happened upon the scene. Region 1 only, alas. I really should invest in a multi-region player one of these days because acquiring this version is tempting, not just for the better quality but also for the extras. I recently obtained the French Blu-ray version of 'The Emperor Waltz'. It has a nice little booklet; after the holidays I'll try to find out what it says.

The article on the unrealised projects by Martin McQuade is absolutely fascinating and I appreciate all the research which must have gone into writing this article.

I liked Jeremy Rose's article on Connie Boswell. It would be great to be able to hear more of their renditions together and with the Sisters on the Woodbury programme. Who knows what will come to light in the future! You would have expected that the Woodbury Company as sponsor had reference copies made, but obviously this is not the case, as neither Kraft did this. As I understand (from Gary Giddins book) there were only written reports. I wonder if someone has ever checked on the subject. I cannot remember, but probably this has been thoroughly researched.

I liked Ken Crossland's lockdown experiences. It seems we both enjoyed that 1976 Montreal show - I recently saw the part of the show that's on YouTube. Marvellous. By the way: Where can we buy that T-shirt?! :-)

It's a pity there were no CD's or DVD's to cover for Richard Baker but nonetheless there's a lot of interest in his views on the record and film industry.

I am in touch again with Philippe Peerboom, who recently re-joined the ICC. We both have the intention to re-start our Dutch Bing meetings, which ended around ten years ago. The first date is already set! :-)

Kind regards, and thanks again for an interesting and inspiring issue of BING!

Jon Oye, *by email from Waukegan, Illinois, USA*

In response to your query in the summer 2020 issue of BING, here are my two cents on colorization: If a photo is black and white, leave it black and white. At this point in time, photographs of Bing have entered the domain of historical artifacts, and adding ersatz color to the ones that were originally black and white compromises their contextual significance, as well as their visual integrity. Aesthetically, colorization is a discomfiting distraction, IMHO.

(Editor: Some valid points from Frans and Jon about colorization which I shall certainly take on board. However, in the meantime there a few more colorized photos in this issue for your further consideration.)

Bert Bishop, *by email from Chelmsford, Essex, UK*

Just to say that an excerpt of the rare Bing cartoon "Who Killed Cock Robin" was to be seen in the Talking Pictures channel film "Sabotage" a couple of days ago. This early Hitchcock thriller can be said to be a 'collectable' for Bing fans! In case you don't know, the cartoon sequence occurs when the film's main female character is at the cinema and it comes on screen. 'Bing' as a bird, gets shot with an arrow to stop him ba-ba-booing!

John Bassett, *by email from Rochford, Essex, UK*

I wonder if any members were aware of the fact that an original 78 of "I've Got the Girl" was up for auction on eBay in mid-August. To my knowledge, this is the third time in two years that Bing's historic "first" has appeared on the global selling site by way of two American issues and one UK issue. Collectors cannot bemoan that these rare items never see the light of day! 824-D sold a couple of days ago for £70.59 on eBay. co.uk. Sorry to say I wasn't lucky in this instance!

Richard Muirhead, *by email from East Calder, West Lothian, Scotland*

Thoroughly enjoyed the last copy of BING. The colorising software for photographs is excellent, very handy and you can't see the joins.

Re your comments in regards to future CD issues. I have listed my wish list below, I appreciate many of the tracks will have been released, in part at least, elsewhere but it would nice to have complete CD versions with original artwork. Not sure about the copyright restrictions though.

Hey Jude/Hey Bing (love this album)

The complete Brunswick Bing's Hollywood vinyl series 1-15 (superb artwork). Some have been released on CD.

The Ace of Hearts vinyl releases e.g. Old Masters vols 1-3, Bing Rare Style, Bing Sings for Children, Among My Souvenirs etc

Well I can dream can't I?

David Currington, *by email from Turramurra, New South Wales, Australia*

Not a member of the club but a lover of old music and Bing, Percy Waters died on September 4 aged 101. Percy was a combined serviceman in the London audience to witness Bing at Queensbury all of those years ago. He lived locally and we had our last outing a couple of years back when a group of us went to see the restored KING OF JAZZ at a Sydney Art Deco Theatre. I feel that Percy may well have been the last living contact with that piece of Bing history.

Crosbyana

Ken Crossland has some "Beautiful Memories".

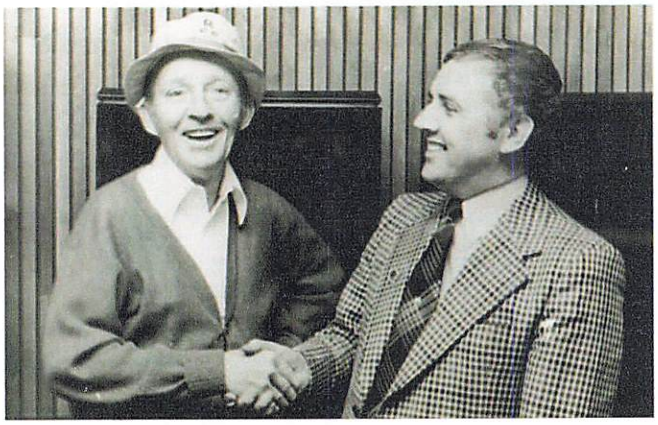
A few years back, I came across a book by Daniel J. Levitin called *This Is Your Brain on Music - The Science of Human Obsession*. Not the snappiest title, but what's inside is fascinating. Why do some songs "stick" with us, attaching themselves to thoughts, memories and sensations such that the instant you hear it, you are transported somewhere to a point in time and space?

Like June, my wonderment about how all of this works comes around every year, when autumn comes calling. The song, and indeed the album that kicks it off is "Beautiful Memories", the last album of original material to be released whilst Bing was still with us. After the endless joys of the previous two years, Bing so active, prominent, and above all else, live on stage, 1977 had not turned out to be the year we expected. In March, the Crosby Express had hit the buffers with Bing's fall from a stage in Pasadena, and for most of the next six months, the plans for a second UK tour, and points beyond, rose and dipped like an ocean wave.

Finally, after a tentative return to the stage at the Concord Pavilion in California in August 1977, the news came that Bing would return to the London Palladium in late September, preceded by a short provincial UK tour. "Beautiful Memories", the last of Bing's contracted albums with United Artists prior to his new deal with Polydor, had been held over from 1976 so that its release could tie in with Bing's return to the UK stage. I bought my copy in September 1977. It was in many respects, a here today, gone tomorrow album. Within weeks of its release, Bing was dead and his first and last project for Polydor, "Seasons", recorded in London that autumn, was rush released to milk the inevitable sales stream that followed his demise.

That autumn though was much more than a tale of two albums. It was the time in my life when two things happened. One was a dream coming true and the other was a demonstration that somewhere, somehow, there are things at work in this universe that are beyond our power of comprehension.

I had joined the International Crosby Circle back in the late 1960s as a callow teenager and one of the first things that struck me when my copies of *BING* started to drop through the letter box were the stories of fans' meeting Bing. It had never occurred to me that a star of Bing's magnitude might be accessible, but sure enough, here were accounts of meetings, some by chance on a golf course, or at a hotel, others more orchestrated. It was our Secretary/Treasurer, Michael, who had been my conduit into the Crosby Circle and I was fascinated by his story of his meeting with Bing in 1966 at Cockermouth in the English Lake District, an event orchestrated by Frank Murphy, the genial Geordie who was then editor and fulcrum of the ICC in the UK, and was set to be my dream maker.



Bing with Frank Murphy in 1975

I was acutely aware that Bing was moving into old age (although as I write this, I am now the age that he was then and would meet any accusation of being "old" with a lawsuit) and that his trips to the UK would probably be fewer and farther between. I so wanted to meet him but I wondered whether time was my enemy. I remember attending one of the early Crosby get-togethers at Michael's house in Leeds, in 1972, when the ever-ebullient Ralph Harding arrived like a barely-tamed hurricane, his right hand in the air as he proclaimed that "two hours ago this hand was shaking Crosby's". Bing, visiting the UK, had been playing golf in Southport and Ralph had made a detour to shake the famous hand. Ralph had met Bing many times but the excitement he got from doing it all again was infectious.

That same visit, Bing recorded his first appearance on the BBC's "Parkinson" show and there was an allocation of tickets to club members, but not to me. A year later, I trekked to Scotland, expecting to find Bing at St Andrews for a golf tournament to which he had given his name. The magazine was full of stories of fans meeting him on the golf course in 1972 but sadly, in my year, 1973, he changed his plans at the last minute and stayed home.

1974 opened with Bing's lung illness and slow recovery and the idea of a meeting started to look like a pipe dream. And then the remarkable resurgence. February 1975, Bing in London to make records, a few fans to be allowed to attend the sessions. Too few for me though. Then, in July, another "Parkinson" show, and this time, I did have a ticket. It was the first time I saw Bing in the flesh and heard him sing live. I was part of the throng around the stage door, when Bing slipped

The photo that Bing preferred to sign on the back!

out of another exit to the safety of a waiting car. To my surprise, the car remained stationary. As the crowd encircled it, Bing, still dressed in his performance blazer and bow tie, wound down a window just enough for items to be passed through for signing. I passed him a photo taken earlier in the year at the first United Artists recording session. Bing looked straight at me, never said a word, looked at the photo, flipped it over and signed it on the back - not what I had wanted!

By 1976, the bandwagon was rolling and Bing was in London most of the summer. I saw him at the Palladium and along with Michael and our wives, travelled to see him in Edinburgh. The following morning, we knew that Bing would be leaving early and somehow - I don't recall how - we talked our way into the lobby of the Scotsman Hotel. Knowing that Bing hated to be pounced upon, we sent a message to his room, explaining who we were and asking for a moment of his time.

The British comedian, Ted Rogers, came down first and having overdone his disguise, left incognito, to his own disappointment, I sensed. Then Rosemary Clooney appeared, and we grabbed a brief word, as we did with Bing's son, Nathaniel. Then Bing. He headed to the desk to checkout, and said, "Where are the people who sent the message?" At that point, two other fans who had attached themselves to us, broke ranks and forced themselves on Bing, demanding an autograph. The shutters came down and our moment passed. So near and yet so far.

Fast forward to Saturday, 8 October 1977. I had been at Bing's show at the Palladium the previous Tuesday, and had tickets for the final show of the two-week series that evening. My parents, lifelong Crosby fans, had travelled to London too to see Bing for the first time, and all of my thoughts that night were about what a special occasion it was for them. For once, perhaps the only time when I was anywhere near Bing's presence, I gave no thought at all to the idea of trying to meet him.

It was a foul night, pouring rain, and we arrived at the Palladium very early. There was a gathering of the great and the good, in Crosbyana terms, outside. Leslie Gaylor, from the Isle of Wight, held court for a while and then I ran into Frank Murphy, clutching a large bottle of whisky. He, like Ralph Harding, had met Bing more times than he could remember but always wanted one more. He was, he said, going to try to get to see Bing in his dressing room to give him the whisky, and would I like to come along? My parents, along with my wife, Linda, headed into the theatre, whilst Frank and me, plus two other fans that he knew, presented ourselves at the stage door. Bing, we knew, had been filming an interview for a TV station, and it was already 7.30pm. In half an hour, Bing would be on stage to open the show.

Bing's English butler, Alan Fisher appeared, with the news that there was no time for Bing to meet anyone now, before the show. Then, from down the corridor, came the voice of Kathryn Crosby. "Alan, who are you speaking to?" she asked. When Fisher replied that we were "fans of Mr. Crosby", Kathryn too, appeared, saying "let me meet them". On seeing Frank, she stopped in her tracks. "Alan" she said, "these are not just fans. This is Frank Murphy. Go tell Mr. Crosby that Frank Murphy is here".

He was back in no time at all. "Just a few moments", he said "and no photographs". We were shepherded to the door of Bing's dressing room, a white leather sofa prominent in the background, as Bing stood in earnest discussion with Ted Rogers. He was dressed for the stage, but without his tuxedo jacket, black braces (suspenders to our American readers) prominent and looking for all the world as if he had just stepped out of the "I Love You, Samantha" scene in "High Society". Rogers finished his conversation and left - "Aren't you the lucky ones?" he said, as he passed us by.

Bing turned towards us. His eyes were heavy and dark yet still crystal-blue, his skin gnarled and leathered, like a fisherman who had spent his life on the ocean. "Hiya, Frank", how are ya'?" Frank made the introductions, we shook hands and chatted for a moment or two about nothing in particular - the awful weather, Bing's upcoming, final show in Brighton, and then his trip to Spain. Of such trivia are dreams made. As we made to leave, Bing said "Thanks for coming backstage, fellas". The pleasure was all mine.

I spent most of the following week thinking about what had happened and wondering how it had happened - and like Ralph and Frank, and dozens more - planning for the next time. Perhaps a longer chat. Hopefully a photograph. And then, six days later, a knock of the door and a next-door neighbour telling me about the headline news on the BBC.

How did that meeting happen? What were the circumstances that first of all led me to Frank Murphy outside the Palladium and the chain of events that followed? 43 years on, I still have no answer. That night was absolutely the last time that mine and Bing's paths would come near to crossing, the last opportunity that I would ever have to shake Bing's hand. Something, somewhere, arranged the pieces so that I could. These are the days I will remember, so full of beautiful memories.

Ken Crossland *ken54@blueyonder.co.uk*

(Editor: What a lovely article from Ken! That last night at the Palladium was quite something as Pat Forster reminded us many years ago.

SATURDAY: THE LAST NIGHT: No words can adequately describe this wonderful evening - audience full to capacity and many celebrities - Bernard Braden, Barbara Kelly, Henry Cooper I noticed - the ovation Bing got when he came on was thunderous and overwhelming - people shouting 'Good old Bing' and waving programmes - no 'fluffs' tonight - he was in superb form, laughing and dancing, and obviously enjoying himself and free from pain - rapturous applause at the end of each song, and especially the first half. A great welcome when he was seen on stage at the beginning of the second half - applause was again rapturous for each song - during the medley they cheered to the echo especially 'Basin St. Blues' and 'Million Dollar Baby' - he could not continue for some while after these. After 'White Christmas' the cheering went on for some minutes - at the end of the medley the audience just went mad, an ovation of nearly five minutes - he could not speak - they just would not stop cheering - in the end he sang a few more bars of 'Ol' Man River' just to get them quiet. Bing then thanked everyone for being such marvellous audiences for the two weeks and said how much he had enjoyed being here - he loved us, London, and the Palladium - then the standing ovation was unbelievable; flowers were thrown down from the boxes - people had run down the aisles and were packed round the stage when he came on for solo curtain-calls - everyone just went wild - I have never seen or heard anything like it in a theatre before.

Comments I heard as we finally left were:

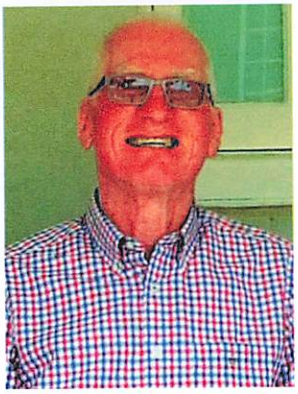
A young boy attendant at the entrance was telling people it was the best show ever put on at the Palladium.

A group of men - one said to the others he could hardly speak the show had been so overwhelmingly magnificent and emotional. Another said Bing could sing any type of song; there was only one Bing - there will never be the like of him again - never anyone to beat him.....

(Pat Forster, reproducing her contemporaneous notes from each show in BING magazine, September 1987)

A Note from Australia

Graham Pascoe reports.



The latest issue of BING is another interesting one and I congratulate all involved. I especially enjoyed reading the results of the research by Anton ('Dixie Lee Crosby'), Lorne Harasen ('Uncle John'), Bob Ault ('Bing's First Record'), Frans van der Kolff ('A Christmas Sing with Bing'), Martin McQuade ('If Only ... If Only') and Jeremy Rose ('Bing 'n' Connie').

As for the question of coloured photos, I think it's important to have the cover photos in colour as it helps the magazine stand out when it's on my coffee table and (the occasional) visitors may see it. Black-and-white photos are, I believe, more appropriate when they accompany an article on one of Bing's black-and-white movies, unless the picture reproduces a coloured lobby poster which promoted the movie.

One of the most intriguing articles I've read in BING for a long time is Martin McQuade's 'If Only ... If Only' about film projects which might have involved Bing but didn't. Perhaps there was another. In Australia in the 1920s and 1930s a magazine titled "Everyones" was directed at cinema owners to inform them and promote films which they might screen. Its' 12 July 1933 issue included: 'Bing Crosby, who has just completed work in "College Humor", has been signed for two more pictures at Paramount. He will have leading roles in "Every Man for Himself", filmusical with Jack Oakie, Skeets Gallagher and Harry Green; and in "Cloudy with Showers", Thomas Mitchell's comedy which has just been purchased.' It would seem that "Every Man for Himself" became "Too Much Harmony" but, as Gary Giddins noted, "Cloudy with Showers" was never made.

As we know, Bing did appear in "Rhythm on the River", described by David Lobosco in *BING* as a fun picture to watch so I was inspired to watch my DVD of the movie again. It is indeed a fun picture. David noted that it was reviewed favourably in New York by Bosley Crowther. It reached Australia in November 1940 and the reviewer in Melbourne's evening newspaper "The Herald" was non-committal although he, like Crowther, was impressed by Bing, writing 'Bing Crosby again reveals his talent as a light comedian'. When it went to Sydney three weeks before Christmas, The Sydney Morning Herald reckoned 'Bing Crosby, who never puts himself out on the screen, acts and sings with his usual nonchalance'.

There were some strange treatments in the promotion of "Rhythm on the River". The advertisement in The Sydney Morning Herald by the Prince Edward Theatre

on opening day described it as 'the season's grandest musical show' but the only songs it listed were two sung by Mary Martin. The music magazine "Tempo" plugged the film (probably using a Paramount publicity release) as Paramount's "Rhythm on the River" featuring Wingy Manone and John Scott Trotter, 'a daffy-dilly tale, acted out on cheerful stages by a gang of players who don't mind working for a living ... the most amazing assortment of human curios ever collected by a studio'. I suppose the musicians who read the magazine would have appreciated that. The back page was devoted to four photos of the film's stars, including stills of Bing and Mary Martin and two Paramount executives.

Sydney folk were able to see "Rhythm on the River" on the big screen later in the 1940s when it was revived at city cinemas in 1943 and 1946. Television came to Australia in 1956 and between then and 1979 they could watch it in their lounge rooms seven times.

As for the songs. 'Only Forever' with 'When the Moon Comes Over Madison Square' and 'That's for Me' with 'Rhythm on the River' were in the shops when the film opened in November. The reviewer in "Tempo" correctly predicted that 'Only Forever' would be the hit and it made the charts for one month but he considered all four sides to be good. The 'Only Forever' disc remained in Decca's Australian catalogue until 1948 selling almost five thousand copies.

DECCA
MADE IN AUSTRALIA BY
COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE (AUST) PTY. LTD. SYDNEY. N.S.W.
ONLY FOREVER
(From Paramount Film "Rhythm on the River")
(Monaco & Burke) (Speed 78)
BING CROSBY, Vocal
With John Scott Trotter & His Orchestra
(DLA2033) Y5520
MUST NOT BE USED FOR RADIO
BROADCASTING NOT PUBLICLY PERFORMED
DLA 2033 A

The sales of sheet music were still important to music publishers at this time. In Australia there were many examples of Bing's picture dominating the front covers of the sheet music of songs which he either did not record in the studio or sing in one of his films, although some had been sung by others in Crosby films. Two examples of the latter are 'I Don't Want to Cry Anymore' and 'Ain't It a Shame About Mame', sung so well by Mary Martin in "Rhythm on the River". The Sterling Music Publishing Company of Sydney published the sheet music of those songs and put Bing's photo on the covers.

Reading Jeremy Rose's 'Bing 'n' Connie That's A-Plenty for Me!' made me appreciate his enthusiasm and research effort for that wonderful duet partnership. Not all of the ten sides they recorded together reached Australia as singles. Their first with 'Basin Street Blues' and 'Bob White (Watcha Gonna Swing Tonight?)' was pressed here in April 1938 about six months after they recorded it. It received a glowing review in "Tempo": 'Both singers excell themselves and give us the two best vocal discs for quite a long time.' Over ten years it became the fourth-best Crosby release of 1938, the best being 'When Mother Nature Sings Her Lullaby' with 'Darling Nellie Gray'. The best-selling Australian record of the partnership pressed 'An Apple for the Teacher' with Bing's solo on 'A Man and his Dream'. Released in December 1939 it also lasted until 1948 with sales of eleven thousand. "Tempo"'s reviewer thought Bing and Connie blended beautifully on 'Apple'. Bing's 'Star Dust' with 'Deep Purple' became his best-seller from 1939 with sales exceeding twenty-two thousand.

Jeremy Rose considered their 'Tea for Two' duet to "be a misjudged effort. "Tempo"'s Ron Wills had reservations about it too, writing 'neither sounds comfortable' but praised the other side of the disc which offered Bing and the Andrews Sisters on 'Ciribiribin'. By 1955 it sold 7285 copies. That was the only poor review of a Crosby-Boswell record in Australia but I rather like their effort. Australian record buyers could not buy locally-pressed single records of the 'That's A-Plenty' duet from 1952 or the January 1938 recordings of 'Alexander's Ragtime Band' and 'Home on the Range'/ 'True Confession'. Presumably because they were thought to be less relevant to buyers 'Down Under' although surely Eddie Cantor's spoken introduction on the first track could have been eliminated.

DECCA
MADE IN AUSTRALIA BY
COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE (AUST) PTY. LTD. SYDNEY. N.S.W.
TEA FOR TWO
(From RKO Radio Film "No, No, Nanette")
(Youmans, Hubsch & Caesar) (Speed 78)
BING CROSBY & CONNIE BOSWELL
Vocal Duet. With Bob Crosby's Bob Cats
(DLA2271) Y5609
CHAPPELL'S SYDNEY
MUST NOT BE USED FOR RADIO
BROADCASTING NOT PUBLICLY PERFORMED

As you may be reading this as the festive season approaches I'll close with a note on the "A Christmas Sing with Bing" record. Frans van der Kolff was obviously pleased with his purchase of the LP and it was interesting to read his report on how the 1955 radio special was followed by subsequent shows. Frans learned that the record was released in Australia and Aussies liked the record sufficiently for it to be broadcast on radio on every Christmas Eve from 1955 to 1962. Sometimes, such as in 1957, retailers included the LP in their advertisements directed at Christmas shoppers; sometimes, as in 1959, its forthcoming broadcast on radio warranted a mention in the daily newspaper. The LP was still on sale in 1980.

Graham Pascoe *gpascoe34@bigpond.com*

Bing on the Box

Malcolm Macfarlane surveys the TV and radio scene of the last four months.

TV Highlights - USA & Canada

A Connecticut Yankee	TCM
Going My Way	TCM
High Society	TCM
Hollywood Remembers	WAVE
Robin and the 7 Hoods	TCM

Ron Field watched "Hollywood Remembers" and commented, "Not too bad. Clips from "Mr. Music" and "Little Boy Lost," "Stagecoach" but not "Country Girl." The two Father O'Malley films plus "Going Hollywood" and a couple of others."

David Lobosco wrote about a show he was watching on Netflix called "Ratchet," a prequel to "One Who Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," and on the last episode you can hear Bing and The Andrews Sisters singing "Don't Fence Me In." Nice to still hear Bing on new shows!

USA & Canadian Radio

Arne Fogel's long-running weekly radio program "The Bing Shift" continues on Sundays at 7 p.m. (CST) on KBEM-FM "JAZZ 88" (88.5 FM) in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. It can be accessed on demand at **http://www.jazz88.fm/show/the-bing-shift/** and it's always enjoyable with an eclectic selection. Here's the playlist for the September 20 broadcast which initially looked at Bing's work with Woody Herman.

Let's All Meet at My House – I Ain't Got Nobody – The Whistler's Mother-in-Law – I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes – Humpty Dumpty Heart – Deep in the Heart of Texas – How Deep Is the Ocean – Golden Earrings – I'm Yours – Let's Try Again – Misto Cristofo Columbo – Git Along, Little Dogies – My Kinda Love – Nevertheless (I'm in Love with You) – Painting the Clouds with Sunshine – The One I Love (Belongs to Somebody Else)

Greg Van Beek's weekly radio series *Nostalgia* Radio Time has continued its long run, albeit at different times on new stations. Greg always has a "Bing Sings" segment in the hour-long program. Each Sunday the show from the previous week is uploaded in Podcast form at: **https://nostalgiaradiotime.podomatic.com/** where you'll find nearly a full year of the shows available on demand 24/7!

On July 4, Greg included the Command Performance show from June 17, 1944 hosted by Jack Benny with Bing, Georgia Gibbs, Harpo Marx, Gary Cooper, and Ann Miller.

Crosby Internet Radio has continued to broadcast 24/7 with a wide variety of shows including some of Arne Fogel's excellent "Bing Shift" programs. I mention Crosby Internet Radio in every issue but I'm sure that there are members who have never listened to it. Use the link on the BING magazine news page –

http://bingmagazine.co.uk/bingmagazine/news.htm

The shows change on a monthly basis with the 15-minute 1954-56 show typically running throughout the day with other programs such as the KMH, Philco, Chesterfield and GE shows being interleaved every hour or so. The Crosby-Clooney shows are used frequently too.

Star Spangled Radio Hour broadcasts, which are available on cruisin1430, have continued to include Bing now and again. On August 15, the superb Command Performance Victory Extra show hosted by Bing and broadcast on VJ Day was included as part of the 75-year anniversary celebrations. Bing is heard singing a parody medley with Frank Sinatra and then later "San Fernando Valley" before finishing the show with "White Christmas".

The shows remain on the site for some months so it's well worth checking to see if they are still there. Follow this link:

https://www.dennismspragg.com/star-spangled-radio-hour/

The "Those Were the Days" program which airs from 1 to 5 p.m. Saturdays on College of DuPage WDCB 90.9-FM and online at wdcb.org., kicked off its celebration of radio's 100th anniversary on October 3rd. This was the start of a monthlong series of milestone and landmark broadcasts from the Golden Age of Radio. The first show show featured what host Steve Darnall calls "the most famous radio broadcast of all time" — Orson Welles and the Mercury Theater on the Air's 1938 production of "The War of the Worlds." Other treats included were Bing's first appearance on network radio in 1931, Agnes Moorehead's first performance of "Sorry, Wrong Number" in 1943, and a 1940 "Fibber McGee and Molly" broadcast, during which they open their famous hall closet for the first time.

TV Highlights - UK

Crosby items seen since our last issue was prepared included:

Discovering Bing Crosby	Sky Arts
My Favourite Brunette	Sony Classic Movies
Road to Morocco	Sony Classic Movies
Road to Rio	Sony Classic Movies
Son of Paleface	Sony Classic Movies
The Country Girl	Talking Pictures
The Princess and the Pirate	Sony Classic Movies

UK Radio

The National Presenters

Not much to report as I can no longer easily spot Bing songs played on the BBC following changes to their website. Unfortunately, I have only been aware of the following being played on the BBC national networks (Radio2 unless stated) of over the last four months.

Don Black: Come Share the Wine (Aug 16)

Dermot O'Leary: Gone Fishin' (July 11)

Elaine Paige on Sunday: Heat Wave (Aug 2) – The Waiter, The Porter and The Upstairs Maid (Aug 30)

The Local Radio Presenters

A similar problem arises with the BBC local radio stations and I have only picked out the presenters who regularly play Crosby tracks and our kind of music by looking at the details of their individual broadcasts. All of the programmes listed can be heard live on the Internet or later on the BBC i-player.

Howard Leader (BBC Radio Lincolnshire) has a 4-hour programme of big band swing and balladeers which goes out each Sunday afternoon at 2pm on Sundays. Bing songs played included:

Gonna Build a Mountain (June 28) – Coming in on a Wing and a Prayer (July 12) – In the Good Old Summertime (July 19) – Too Marvellous for Words (July 26) – Isn't This a Lovely Day (Aug. 2) – Did You Ever See a Dream Walking (Aug. 9) – We'll Make Hay When the Sun Shines (Aug. 23) – Be Honest with Me (Aug. 23) – An Apple for the Teacher (Aug. 30) – In a Little Spanish Town (Sep. 6) – Just One of Those Things (Sep. 13) – Don't Get Around Much Anymore (Sep. 20) – It's Been a Long, Long Time (Oct. 4)

Beverley Humphreys presents *Beverley's World of Music:* (BBC Radio Wales, Sundays 9pm.) Songs played:

Dear Hearts and Gentle People (July 5) – Red Sails in the Sunset (July 12) – On a Slow Boat to China (July 19) – Moonlight Becomes You (July 19 – nice plug for our magazine) - Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive (Aug. 9) – Isle of Capri (Aug. 16) – Where the Blue of the Night (Aug. 16) – It's Been a Long, Long Time (Aug. 23) – In The Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening (Aug. 30) – The Isle of Capri (Sep. 6) – Dear Hearts and Gentle People (Sep. 13) – Moonlight Bay (Sep. 27) – I'll Be Seeing You (Oct. 4)

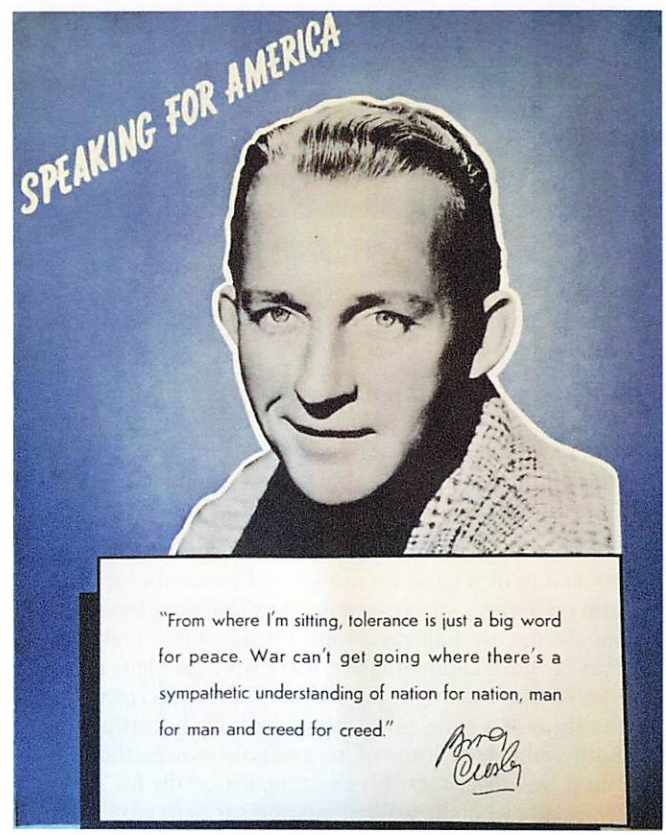
Bill Rennells' *Harmony Night* show on BBC local radio stations throughout the South East of England and on the Internet on Sundays at 10 p.m. Bing songs heard:

The Three Caballeros (July 5) – Top O' the Morning (July 12) – True Love (July 19) – Love Is Blue (July 26) – The Isle of Innisfree (Aug. 16) – You Are My Sunshine (Aug. 16) – True Love (Aug. 23)

Gerald Jackson likes to play Bing now and then and among the songs heard on his 4-hour stint on Radio Lancashire starting at 6pm on Sundays were:

Your Socks Don't Match (July 5) – The Kiss in Your Eyes (July 12 – nice plug for our magazine) – Come Share the Wine (July 19) – Beautiful Dreamer (July 26) – Put It There, Pal (Aug. 2) – If I Had My Way (Aug. 2) – The Anniversary Waltz (Sep. 6) – A Fine Romance (Sep. 20)

Malcolm Macfarlane *macwilmslo@aol.com*


SPEAKING FOR AMERICA
"From where I'm sitting, tolerance is just a big word for peace. War can't get going where there's a sympathetic understanding of nation for nation, man for man and creed for creed."
Bing Crosby

Once in a While

Personalities associated with Bing who have left us since our last issue was prepared, include:

Regis Philbin, the legendary television host passed away on July 24 at the age of 88. Regis Francis Xavier Philbin was born in New York on August 25, 1931, to Frank and Florence Philbin. He was named after Regis High School, a Jesuit school in Manhattan attended by his father. Regis graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 1953 with a degree in sociology before going on to serve in the US Navy. Philbin got his start in show business as a page on NBC's "The Tonight Show." He later hosted "The Regis Philbin Show" out of San Diego before joining "The Joey Bishop Show" as Bishop's sidekick. It was there that he met Bing in 1967.

Regis and Bing on the Joey Bishop Show

He described the event in his autobiography *How I Got This Way*.

> And so I confessed my dream: I told him (*Bishop*) that, at the age of six, I decided I wanted to be Bing Crosby—that I knew every lyric of every song Bing had ever sung, that nothing made me happier than singing along with Bing on the radio.
>
> So it had to happen: three months later, Bing was booked to be a guest on our show. I remember spotting him backstage—this easygoing but towering legend wandering our hallways—and I truly couldn't take my eyes off him. Unfortunately, there were no plans for him to sing that night; he'd simply agreed to come on the show as a panel guest, along with his beautiful wife, Kathy, and share some of his great old stories, then leave. But it was all still terribly exciting. Especially for me. Especially when he walked out and sat *right next to me.*
>
> My whole life flashed before me—thirty years prior to all of this I was just a dream-filled kid, freezing on those cold Bronx nights, listening to Bing sing on my little radio. How did all this happen? Who could have imagined that now, so many years later, *I would be sitting next to Bing Crosby on a big network TV show in Hollywood?* It's one of those times when you have to pinch yourself in order to believe it.
>
> The show's producers, of course, would have loved for Bing to sing anything that night, but they were afraid to ask him. Then, as the interview progressed, Joey had an idea. He would try to talk him into it by using me as his pawn, right on the air! "Bing, see this kid," Joey said, nodding toward me. "He's the biggest fan you ever had. It would be the biggest thrill of his life if you would sing a song for him. How about 'Too Ra Loo Ra Loo Ral? I was getting nervous. How would Bing react? Well, he turned, looked directly at me, and simply sang the song a capella. He sounded great. It was so exciting, my head was spinning. How could I tell him what he had meant to me all these years? I should have, but I couldn't.

Regis did not think that a recording of the event existed but in 2004 Greg Van Beek was liaising with musician Nick Perito who was about to work with Mr. Philbin. Greg had an audio copy of the Joey Bishop show which had originally come from Martin McQuade and he sent it to Regis via Mr. Perito. To say Regis was grateful is an understatement and he contacted Greg to thank him and arising from that Mr. Philbin eventually became an honorary member of the ICC and did an interview for Greg's radio show.

After leaving the Bishop show and after a stint as the host of a local Los Angeles TV talk show, Regis became the co-host in 1983 of "The Morning Show" on WABC eventually linking with Kathie Lee Johnson (later Gifford) in 1985. Subsequently in 1988 the show was syndicated and renamed "Live! with Regis and Kathie Lee". The duo continued hosting together until 2000, at which point Philbin hosted the show alone -- then dubbed "Live with Regis" -- until he was joined by Kelly Ripa in 2001 and the show was renamed "Live! with Regis and Kelly". He finally left the show in November 2011. Philbin set a Guinness World Record for "Most Hours on Camera" on his August 20, 2004, *Live* show (replacing Hugh Downs), which gave him a total of 15,188 hours on television.

Regis examines some of the memorabilia in the Bing Crosby House

Regis Philbin was the original host of the U.S. version of "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire", an ABC game show that had its roots in Britain. The original U.S. version premiered on ABC on August 16, 1999, as part of a two-week daily special event. After this and a second two-week event aired in November 1999, ABC commissioned a regular series that launched on January 18, 2000, and ran until June 27, 2002. Philbin hosted the entire run of the original network series as well as three additional special event series that aired on ABC in 2004 and 2009.

Throughout his life Regis always credited Bing with inspiring his career and in 2009 he visited Gonzaga on a pilgrimage to his idol's alma mater. A visit which was described in detail by Stephanie Plowman in BING #152.

Regis Philbin had been married since March 1970 to Joy Philbin, with whom he had two children, Jennifer and Joanna. An earlier marriage to Kay Faylan lasted from 1957 to 1968. Philbin had two children with Faylan, Danny and Amy.

Zizi Jeanmaire, the French dancer and singer, an iconic cabaret showgirl whose grace and glamour was celebrated on stage and in film the world over, died on July 17 in Switzerland aged 96. Jeanmaire starred in ballets, cabarets, musicals and film, mixing styles but never compromising on the rigour of her classical training. Many of her roles were created by her husband Roland Petit, the renowned choreographer who died in 2011. It was her leading performance in Petit's modern interpretation of "Carmen" in 1949, featuring the short-cropped hairstyle that became her trademark feature, which launched her into the spotlight. The new-look production caused a sensation when it was performed in Paris, London and New York.

Jeanmaire was born in Paris on April 29, 1924, her real name was Renee Marcelle Jeanmaire. Her nickname is reportedly rooted in her childhood pronunciation of "Mon zizi" for "Mon Jesus" (My Jesus). She left the Paris Opera Ballet at 19, saying she wanted to see the world and she eventually made her way into Hollywood and New York. Jeanmaire and Roland Petit had met in 1933, when they were around nine years old and students at the Paris Opera Ballet. They married in 1954 and had a daughter.

Her leading film roles were in the 1950s, including in the Hollywood musical "Hans Christian Andersen" (1952), about the life of the Danish storyteller, and of course "Anything Goes" (1956) with Bing, which David Lobosco has reviewed in "Celluloid Crosby". In the latter film, Le Bing sings "All Through the Night" to her in a very pleasant scene. Returning to France, she triumphed at Paris' Alhambra music hall in 1961 with a performance of "Mon Truc en Plumes" and in 1966 she danced alongside Rudolf Nureyev for the film version of Petit's ballet "Le Jeune Homme et la Mort" (The Young Man and Death).

With Bing in Anything Goes

Her name is featured in the opening line of Peter Sarstedt's name-dropping classic "Where Do You Go to My Lovely" (1969), which says: "You talk like Marlene Dietrich, And you dance like Zizi Jeanmaire."

Dame Olivia de Havilland, who died on July 26 aged 104, was a hard-working, apparently unassuming but unforgettable and unforgotten star from Hollywood's golden era. Olivia Mary de Havilland was born in Tokyo on July 1 1916, 16 months before her sister, Joan. Their parents were English. In 1919 it was decided that the two girls, whose health seemed poor, should be taken back to England. The family had reached San Francisco when both daughters fell ill. While they recuperated, Mrs de Havilland took a house in Saratoga, which she liked so much that she decided not to continue the journey at all. Mr. de Havilland stayed in Japan, where, after a divorce in 1925, he married his housekeeper and did not see the children again for many years. Mrs de Havilland later married George Milan Fontaine. Olivia and her sister Joan Fontaine had a famous life-long feud.

Olivia de Havilland made her screen debut in Reinhardt's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (1935) and became a capable actress, well-mannered and softly spoken. She lit up roles that might otherwise have seemed cloyingly sweet or merely uninteresting, such as Maid Marian in "The Adventures of Robin Hood" (1938 – one of eight films with Errol Flynn) and Melanie in "Gone with the Wind" (1939). Excellent performances in "The Snake Pit" (1948) and "The Heiress" (1949) showed that she possessed a wider range, and in a famous clash with the Warner Bros studio she exhibited a steely firmness: but she was always most fondly remembered as the softening feminine element in swashbuckling adventure stories. She was nominated for five Academy Awards winning Best Actress in a leading role for "To Each His Own" (1946) and "The Heiress" (1949).

In June 2017, two weeks before her 101st birthday, de Havilland was appointed Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in the 2017 Birthday Honours for services to drama by Queen Elizabeth II. She is the oldest woman ever to receive the honour.

Olivia guested on the Kraft Music Hall of July 18, 1940 hosted by Bing and they both took part in the Hollywood Victory Caravan trip in May 1942. As part of the Victory Caravan show, Groucho Marx and Olivia performed together in a domestic skit. Sadly Bing and Olivia never appeared in a film together.

Hugh Downs, the versatile and Emmy-winning broadcaster whose decades-long TV career ranged from anchoring ABC News' "20/20" to the "Today" show to serving as Jack Paar's sidekick on "The Tonight Show," died at his home in Scottsdale, Arizona on July 1st. He was 99.

Born in Akron, Ohio, Downs began working in radio after college -- a stint interrupted by his service during World War II -- before landing at NBC-owned WMAQ in Chicago, where he worked in various capacities for several years before moving to New York.

Downs -- who retired in 1999 -- was essentially there for the very start of commercial television, serving as the announcer for the children's show "Kukla, Fran and Ollie" and comedy legend Sid Caesar's "Caesar's Hour" in the 1950s. In 1957, when Paar succeeded Steve Allen as host of "The Tonight Show," Downs became the announcer. The next year, Downs launched his ten-year run as the original host of the game show "Concentration."

When Paar left "The Tonight Show" in 1962, Downs -- who had frequently substituted for Paar -- thought he might be asked to replace him. Instead, the network hired Johnny Carson and Downs segued to NBC's "Today," where he spent nearly a decade on the morning program.

At "Today," Downs famously championed the career of Barbara Walters, advocating that the young writer-producer be given an opportunity on camera. The two later teamed up on a syndicated program in the mid-1970s, "Not for Women Only," before they were later reunited on "20/20."

Downs was not involved with the development and launch of "20/20" in 1978 but after the first episode, ABC News president Roone Arledge asked Downs to take over as an anchor to fix the show. Walters joined the program the year after its debut and became Downs' co-host in 1984. Downs -- with his baritone voice and soothing manner -- remained with the program until his retirement.

Bing and Hugh Downs interacted on at least a couple of occasions. In "The Road to Lebanon" (1966) with Danny Thomas, Bing sings the title tune on the "Today" show whilst announcer Downs is at first shown as being asleep. Bing then tells Downs that he does not really want Bob Hope in the forthcoming "Road to Lebanon" film and instead he says Danny Thomas would be perfect as an alternative! Then on November 29, 1967, Downs interviewed the crooner on the "Today" show about working with Bob Hope.

Downs won a pair of Emmy awards, for the program "Live from Lincoln Center" and hosting the PBS talk program "Over Easy," which premiered in 1977 and was aimed at older viewers. Guinness World Records once recognized Downs for having appeared in more hours of U.S. television (roughly 10,000) than anyone else, a record later broken by Regis Philbin.

Downs' wife, Ruth Shaheen Downs, died in 2017 at the age of 95. The two had been married since 1944.

Mac Davis, the country singer, actor and songwriter died following heart surgery on September 29 at the age of 78. Born in Lubbock, Texas, in 1942, Davis became a country and adult-contemporary crossover star with solo hits like "Baby Don't Get Hooked on Me," "Stop and Smell the Roses," and "One Hell of a Woman." In 1974, he was named Entertainer of the Year by the Academy of Country Music, beating out nominees like Loretta Lynn and Merle Haggard. That same year, he was nominated for Entertainer of the Year by the Country Music Association. 1974 was also the year he appeared in Bing's annual holiday special "Christmas with the Bing Crosbys." Davis was a keen golfer (handicap 8) and he took part in Bing's pro-am on several occasions in the 1970s. He was scheduled to sing at the clambake at the pro-am in 1976 but had to cry off with a bad cold. Bing took his place at the last moment and performed his Crosby medley, which he was later to use at his concerts, for the first time.

Mac Davis will be particularly remembered for his songwriting for artists like Elvis Presley, Kenny Rogers, Glen Campbell and Bobby Goldsboro. In the late Sixties, Presley recorded a string of Davis compositions, including "A Little Less Conversation" and notably "In the Ghetto." Elvis also recorded the Davis compositions "Memories" and "Don't Cry Daddy."

Mac and Karen Valentine with Bing and Nathaniel on the 1974 Christmas special

The Way We Were

The section of the magazine where we look at what Bing was doing in years gone by.

100 YEARS AGO

On September 15, 1920, Harry Crosby (aged 17) entered Gonzaga University as a day student. The fees were $80.50 per semester (about $1,034 in today's money). He soon became an Assistant Yell Leader (a cheerleader) on the Advisory Board on Athletics. During the semester he sang as a member of the "Republican Quartette" and then on October 27, he played a "colored aristocrat" in the Gonzaga Dramatic Club presentation of the comedy "The Dean of Ballarat" in St. Aloysius Hall. The following month he played one of the colored "end" men and also sang a solo "When the Moon Shines" as the Gonzaga Glee Club presented "A Study in Tone and Color", also at St. Aloysius Hall.

75 YEARS AGO

As September 1945 unwound, Bing was still involved in filming "Blue Skies" and he remained on strike from the Kraft Music Hall. On September 2, he linked an AFRS VJ show with Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra, and Dinah Shore which was broadcast on all networks. He was continuing to make records for Decca and during September, he had sessions with Eddie Heywood, Jimmy Dorsey, Mel Torme, Victor Young and John Scott Trotter producing hits such as "Symphony" (No. 3 in the charts), "Aren't You Glad You're You (No. 8), "Day by Day" (No. 15) and "The Bells of St. Mary's" (No. 21). The songs from the film of "The Bells of St. Mary's" were issued on a 78rpm album and this reached the No. 3 position in Billboard's best-selling popular albums chart in April 1946.

During September, Bing was also involved in recording shows for the Armed Forces Radio Service and on September 22, he appeared at the Hollywood Bowl in a major benefit concert "Music for the Wounded" to finance the entertainment of the wounded. The finale was a medley of songs from "Porgy & Bess" performed by Bing, Dinah Shore and Frank Sinatra with John Scott Trotter conducting the orchestra. On September 29, Bing made a film short "The Road to Home" with Bob Hope for the Navy. It was a propaganda film designed to persuade sailors not to "jump ship" prematurely following the end of World War II.

Bing was in severe pain whilst making the film and this announcement followed:

Crosby Ends All 1945 Engagements to Enter Hospital

Terminating all his professional engagements for the remainder of 1945, Bing Crosby will enter St. John's Hospital, Santa Monica, tomorrow morning for treatment of a gallstone infection, his brother Larry announced yesterday. The crooner also has suffered from an arthritic condition of the back. Crosby said he will go to his 10,000-acre ranch at Elko, Nev., following his release from the hospital. His wife, the former Dixie Lee, and their four sons will remain in Hollywood. The crooner has just completed front line tours covering more than 75,000 miles for the U.S.O.

(*Los Angeles Times*, September 29, 1945)

Bing left hospital on October 4 and went to his Nevada ranch until November 21. While at Elko, he was joined by Gary Cooper and Clark Gable and they went hunting for pheasant in Ketchum, Idaho (near Sun Valley). Joan Caulfield and her mother also visited.

On November 3, Bing announced, through one of his brothers, that he was going to sell his share in the Del Mar racetrack and this led to a serious row with his brother Ted who had shares in the enterprise.

Arriving in New York on November 24, Bing stayed at the Waldorf Astoria although he also had a room at the Gotham Hotel. Bing had invested in a musical comedy called "Nellie Bly" with songs written by Jimmy Van Heusen and Johnny Burke, and he went to Philadelphia on December 1 for the opening night. The show received poor reviews but continued in Philadelphia until December 13. Later in the month, Bing travelled to Boston and to see the opening night of "Nellie Bly" there but again the reviews were poor.

A significant release in December was the 78rpm album called "Merry Christmas" which consisted of ten songs (including "White Christmas") on five 78s. This remained available in one form or another until the 21st century.

Bing was back in the recording studios on December 4 laying down "Mighty Lak' a Rose" and "The Sweetest Story Ever Told" with Ethel Smith (organ) and Lehman Engel and his Orchestra in New York. The next day he emceed a half-hour radio show "That They Might Walk" on the Mutual Network for the Sister Kenny Foundation in New York.

Bing's film "The Bells of St. Mary's" had its world premiere at Radio City Music Hall December 6. The film went on to be the top box office attraction in the U.S.A. for 1946 grossing $21 million and taking $8 million in rental income in its initial release period.

That same day, Bing made four Irish records with Bob Haggart and his Orchestra plus the Jesters in New York, including "McNamara's Band." This song spent four weeks in the charts with a peak position

of tenth. Another recording session on December 18 with Camarata and his Orchestra produced three songs including "We'll Gather Lilacs" and he recorded with Camarata again on December 30 for an album of Jerome Kern's songs. Kern had died on November 11 and Bing took part in a nationwide radio tribute to him on December 9.

On the Jerome Kern tribute show with Hildegarde (left) and Patrice Munsel

The crooner's most successful recording venture in New York however was with Bob Haggart on December 27 when "Sioux City Sue" and "You Sang My Love Song to Somebody Else" were laid down. "Sioux City Sue" reached No. 3 in the hit parade and spent 16 weeks in all in the Billboard Best-Sellers list.

Bing had quite a busy social life during his extended stay in New York spending much time with Joan Caulfield. It was to be some weeks before he returned to his family in California.

Bing's royalties from records in 1945 were $400,000 and during the year, he had seventeen records that became chart hits. He was again named as the top U.S.A. movie box office star in the annual poll and he also received the "Look" magazine "Film Achievement Award" for 1945.

50 YEARS AGO

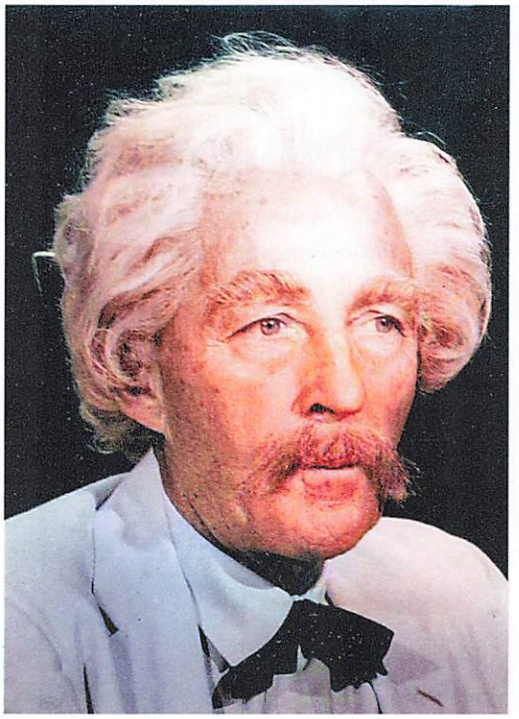
In September 1970, Bing filmed "Dr. Cook's Garden" (a Paramount production for television) at Woodstock, Vermont. The film was based on a Broadway play by Ira Levin and it was eventually shown on ABC-TV in January 1971.

Elsewhere on September 8, Bing's three young children were involved in a car crash with another vehicle in Redding, North California. The vehicle in which they were traveling was being driven by their grandfather, Delbert Grandstaff. They were all taken to Mercy Hospital, Redding. All had cuts and bruises but Mrs. Grandstaff (age 68) had a fractured clavicle and eight broken ribs. Kathryn flew there immediately. Tragically on September 13, Mrs. Grandstaff died unexpectedly and Bing flew to Redding from Pennsylvania and made all the arrangements for the funeral on September 15 in Burney, California.

Five days later, Bing and his family together with Melba Moore, Jack Wild and The Doodletown Pipers started rehearsals for his Christmas show in NBC Studio 3, Burbank. Work on the show was completed on September 23 and it was subsequently broadcast on December 16,

After a shooting trip to Lethbridge in Alberta, Canada, Bing taped an appearance on "The Pearl Bailey Show" with Pearl, Louis Armstrong and Andy Williams in November which was shown on January 23, 1971. He then taped a contribution to the "Flip Wilson Show" which aired on January 7, 1971. Decca Records had awarded Bing a platinum record of "Silent Night" on a plaque that noted Bing's sales of more than 300,650,000 records and this was presented to him by Flip Wilson on the show.

Bing had also recorded a spot in the John Wayne television special "Swing Out, Sweet Land" which was shown on NBC on November 29. In this, Bing played Mark Twain in a short sketch in which he philosophized with freed slave Frederick Douglass (portrayed by Roscoe Lee Browne).



Bing as Mark Twain

On November 13, the Recording Industry Association of America certified Bing's album "Merry Christmas" as a "gold" album as it had achieved $1 million in sales based on the manufacturer's wholesale price. Bing's only recording session of the year took place on November 16, when he sang four Christmas songs with an orchestra conducted by Les Brown at Mercury Sound Studio West in San Francisco. The tracks were eventually issued by Daybreak Records on the LP "A Time to Be Jolly".

Christmas was spent at home in Hillsborough with his family and relatives. There were forty-five guests at the Christmas Eve party for staff and friends. His older sons visited on Christmas Day.

Our Christmas parties followed a joyous routine. Shortly after our arrival, butler Alan Fisher would bring in a large punch bowl of "holiday cheer." After we were sufficiently cheered, Uncle Bing would announce that we should all retire to the living room to sing Christmas carols. He always hired a pianist to accompany us in our festive sing-along. People don't sing together much these days. More is the pity. I recall that the kids in the group always were just a little bit hesitant at first, not sure if they should join in. But, at the strenuous urging of Uncle Bing, myself, and the other adults on hand, they eventually got with the program.

As you might imagine, the musical session was always closed by Uncle Bing. He would stand next to the piano and sing "White Christmas" with a simple piano accompaniment, sans toupee and any pretense. I can see him still, hear him still, and it is a memory I return to every holiday season.

When dinner was announced, we'd all troop down the hall to the dining room. I counted 23 of us that first year, the first time the family had gathered together in ages. Uncle Bing seemed as thrilled as we all were to have the clan under his roof.

(Carolyn Schneider [Bing's niece], writing in her book, *Me and Uncle Bing*, p130)

KEEPING TRACK

RICHARD BAKER BRINGS US UP-TO-DATE

Richard Baker provides his usual update.

A little more to report on this time around and if I include some issues that have but no recordings by Bing, I'm sure that readers will understand that there is some justification for including such close associates as Fred Astaire and the Andrews Sisters.

DVD and BLU-RAY

Light Entertainment Rarities – Network Studio ..... DVD Region 2

Around £13 (UK)

Due for release in November this DVD covers a number of British TV shows from the 1960s. Included is one from the ATV network of 26th August 1961 – "A Big Night out with Peggy Lee" with Bing as the guest star. At the time Bing was in Britain with Bob Hope making "The Road to Hong Kong". If the show included on the DVD is complete Bing should be seen and heard singing "All Of You" with Peggy, "Moonlight Becomes You", "But Beautiful" and finally "High Hopes" on which he is joined by Peggy, Sammy Cahn and David Kossoff. The Bob Sharples Orchestra provide the accompaniment. Other shows on the disc include ones with Sammy Davis Jnr., Duke Ellington, the Kenny Baker Jazz Band.

The First VCR – 360 Sound & Vision ..... DVD Region 1

Around $18 (US)

This one hour long DVD gives a concise history of the development of the first video cassette recorder and I am reliably told that there is quite a bit about Bing's part in it. Those wishing to explore Bing's place in the wider world beyond pure entertainment should find it very interesting.

Rewind to cassette!

In BING #185, under "Buyers turning a deaf ear to vinyl", I mentioned an extraordinary trend of buying vinyl for pure nostalgia without intention or ability to play the discs. Almost immediately after we went to print another press release was issued about a similar resurgence in cassette sales, which have reached levels in the UK at least, not seen since 2003. In consequence National Audio Company of the US and Mulann in Europe have joined forces to create a manufacturing line for high grade magnetic tape. Cassette sales hit highs between 1985, when they overtook vinyl, and 1992 when CD became ascendant. Most cassette manufacturing lines were closed in 2003. The trend is claimed to have been triggered by scenes in the film "Guardians of the Galaxy" where the main character is constantly playing a mixtape on a Walkman as a means of staying connected to Earth and a family he has lost. Not having seen the film I cannot comment further, but the practical result is that sales of Lady Gaga's album "Chromatica" on cassette outsold vinyl, reaching 12,000 between May and July.

My "filler" comments in #185 about record prices over the years sparked a touch of nostalgic reminiscence in one member, who recalled pleasurable hours of browsing through racks in record stores, joyfully finding unexpected gems, wondering if he could justify the expense or placing them on Christmas wish-lists. To my mind that is what was once half the thrill of collecting and for those of us who experienced it the current equivalent of browsing the Internet is a relatively lifeless experience.

Compact Discs

Chesterfield Radio Time - starring Bing Crosby ..... Sepia 1360

USA price to be advised. (UK) - £9.50 to members

CD1

1. Chesterfield intro / 2. A Cockeyed Optimist (Sept. 28, 1949)* / 3. Maybe It's Because (Oct. 26, 1949) / 4. I've Got a Lovely Bunch of Coconuts (Nov. 30, 1949)* / 5. Marta (Rambling Rose of the Wildwood) (Mar 15, 1950) (with Perry Botkin - guitar)) / 6. Candy and Cake (Mar. 29, 1950)* / 7. Music! Music! Music!* / 8. A Dream Is a Wish Your Heart Makes* (with Perry Como) / 9. Dear Old Girl (with Perry Como & Arthur Godfrey) (Tracks 7-9, April 5, 1950) / 10. I've Got the World on a String (with Mildred Bailey) / 11. With My Eyes Wide Open I'm Dreaming (Tracks 10 & 11, April 12, 1950) / 12. Old Folks at Home (aka "Swanee River") (April 19, 1950) (with Lindsay Crosby)* / 13. If I Knew You Were Comin' I'd've Baked a Cake (April 26, 1950) (with Beatrice Lillie) / 14. It Isn't Fair (May 10, 1950) / 15. The Lament of Homer Tracy (May 17, 1950) (with Fred Allen)* / 16. Nevertheless (I'm in Love with You) (Nov. 22, 1950)* / 17. A Bushel and a Peck (Dec. 27, 1950) (with Dinah Shore)* / 18. The Tennessee Waltz (Dec. 27, 1950)* / 19. The Thing (Jan. 3, 1951) (with Fred Astaire)* / 20. You're Just in Love (Jan. 24, 1951) (with Toni Arden)* / 21. The Night Is Young and You're So Beautiful (with Buddy Cole - piano) / 22. Whispering Hope (with Dorothy Kirsten) (Tracks 21 & 22, Feb. 14, 1951) / 23. Can Anyone Explain? (No! No! No!) (Feb. 28, 1951)* / 24. Mockin' Bird Hill (Tra–La–La Twittle Dee Dee) (Mar. 21, 1951) (with Les Paul and Mary Ford) / 25. If (Mar. 28, 1951)* / 26. Would I Love You? (April 4, 1951)* / 27. I Apologize (May 9, 1951)* / 28. The Roving Kind (with The Cass County Boys) / 29. Across the Wide Missouri (aka "Shenandoah") (with The Cass County Boys)* (Tracks 28 & 29, May 16, 1951) / 30. When You and I Were Young, Maggie Blues (May 23, 1951) (with Teresa Brewer)

CD2

1. How High the Moon? (June 13, 1951)* / 2. Diane (June 20, 1951) (with Tommy Dorsey (trombone) and chorus) / 3. Come On–a My House (Oct. 10, 1951)* / 4. Just One More Chance (Nov. 7, 1951) / 5. Over a Bottle of Wine (Nov. 21, 1951)* / 6. Never Before (Dec. 5, 1951) / 7. June in January (Jan. 2, 1952) / 8. The Morning Side of the Mountain* / 9. Because of You* / 10. The World Is Waiting for the Sunrise* / 11. Down Yonder* (Tracks 8-11, Jan. 9, 1952) / 12. Chesterfield Jingle (Sound Off) (with Bob Hope)* (Jan. 16, 1952) / 13. Slow Poke (January 23, 1952)* / 14. If You Catch a Little Cold (I'll Sneeze for You) (with Patti Page) / 15. (It's No) Sin* (Tracks 14 & 15, Jan. 30, 1952) / 16. Charmaine / 17. Lazy River (with The Mills Brothers) (Tracks 16 & 17, Feb. 20, 1952) / 18. Please Mr. Sun (Feb. 27, 1952)* / 19. Come What May (March 5, 1952) 20. Tell Me Why* (March 19, 1952) / 21. The Blacksmith Blues* / 22. With a Song in My Heart (with Helen O'Connell) (Tracks 21 & 22, April 16, 1952) / 23. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (There's a Pawnshop on the Corner)* / 24. I'll Never Be Free (with Kay Starr) (Tracks 23 & 24, April 23, 1952) / 25. I Waited a Little Too Long (April 30, 1952)* / 26. Singin' in the Rain / 27. At Last (Tracks 26 & 27, May 7, 1952). 28. I'll Walk Alone (May 14, 1952) / 29. A–Round the Corner (Beneath the Berry Tree)* / 30. Chesterfield finale (Tracks 29 & 30, June 25, 1952)

* - with The Rhythmaires

Due for issue early in 2021, and likely to be available for members in February, is this 2CD set drawn from the Chesterfield radio series. It forms a nice matching pair with the Philco set covered in Bing #184. As with that issue the songs are largely drawn from hits by other artists but for which earlier CD coverage has been minimal or absent, so most are new to CD. Malcolm Macfarlane has again provided the comprehensive notes. The set offers a good variety of songs representative of the period and as with the Philco set, Bing's own introductions of both songs and guests have been included with a number of items which does a lot to set the scene. As to be expected with radio recordings there is some variation in sound quality. It is intended that order forms be sent out with this issue of BING magazine.

I understand from Sepia that "Through the Years" vol. 7 and "The Road to Hong Kong" are back in stock.

Fred Astaire - The Complete Studio Recordings 1955-1962 ..... Jasmine JASMCD2687

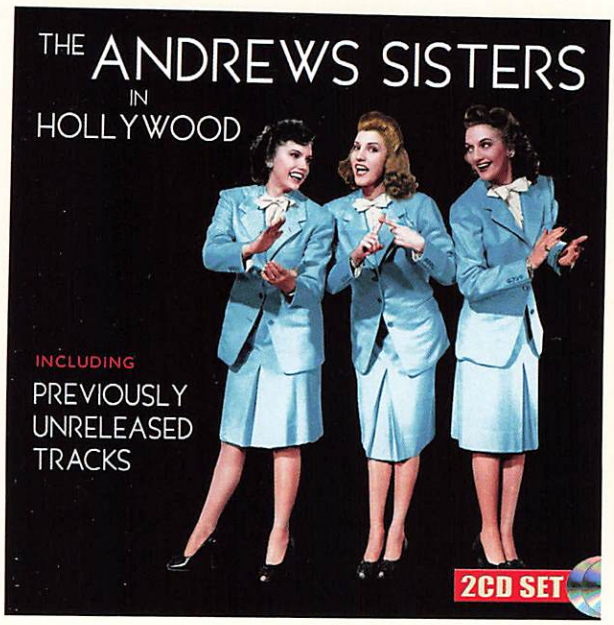
Around $14 (US) £10 (UK)

Also available as MP3 download.

Most CD re-issues of Astaire's records re-cycle his greatest hits from the 1930s and 40s but this CD covers a period which has tended to be ignored. There is much of interest to anyone with an interest in Fred. 28 tracks drawn from original mixes of several singles and a complete stereo album "Now". All the studio recordings made by Fred in the years stated in the title are included. Songs include several written by Astaire himself and two with Oscar Petersen as accompanist.

The Andrews Sisters in Hollywood – 2CD Set ..... Sepia 1354

Around $20 (US) £11.50 (UK)



CD2 track 16. You Don't Have to Know the Language.

Sepia, who have given such support to Bing over the years, have also done well by the Andrews Sisters and have three earlier CDs in their catalogue, including one with the stereo remakes of greatest hits. They have now added this 2CD set which consists of 41 tracks mainly drawn from pre-recordings for film (two of which never made it to film) and recordings made for film publicity purposes rather than the equivalent Decca studio recordings, plus nine identified as "Decca rarities" not previously released on CD. I admire the sisters for their extraordinarily well drilled performances but do sometimes feel their approach rather relentless and I'd welcome more variation in the arrangements for the voices. Change does emerge when they join with other vocalists of whom Bing must be the prime example and with him we get "You Don't Have to Know the Language" which in the version here is over a minute longer than that made for official record release. It is taken from pre- recording for "Road to Rio" with the Paramount Studio Orchestra conducted by Robert Emmett Dolan. Many of the sisters' fans will welcome the issue.

"VIRTUAL" CDs

Peggy Lee – Decca Rarities..... Universal Music Group

Digital download and streaming only. Available on Spotify, Apple, iTunes, Deezer, YouTube Music, Tidal and Amazon Music. Prices will vary depending on subscriptions/membership.

14. The Moon Came Up With a Great Idea Last Night / 16. Merry-Go-Run-Around (with Bob Hope) /18. Watermelon Weather / 21. The Possibility's There

In yet another sign of the way things are going is this attractive "Virtual CD", available for download or streaming but not as a physical CD. The 31 tracks, which I enjoyed a lot, are said to be making their download/streaming debut, and several are certainly new to me. Eleven of the songs were co-written by Peggy herself including seven for the film "Lady and the Tramp", not all of which reached the final film cut. The four listed tracks are with Bing. The Mills Brothers also appear.

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer ..... William Collins Books and Decca Records

Digital download and streaming only.

When I first saw the pre – release publicity for this issue, which I have been unable to try out as yet, I became quite excited because I wrongly assumed it was for a CD. In fact it is an "audiobook" downloadable MP3. I'm unclear which platforms might stock it but it will certainly be available from Amazon. I would really have liked a CD but at least MP3 makes it available to new listeners. The reading is of a cleverly edited version of the Mark Twain book which has not had a reissue in any form since the original release on three LPs or cassettes. Those familiar with it and the original book will know that it takes us through some selected more or less complete segments of the story whilst dropping much else. Whilst readings do not stand up to repeated playing in the same way that music does, I for one have pulled my set out quite frequently over the (unbelievable) space of 44 years since the original issue, and think Bing's reading is very good indeed. The Amazon sites are very confusing because they mix together different editions of the printed book, other readings, and Kindle downloads. Users' ratings and comments are all equally meaningless in this context.

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